

## Select Committee Agenda



### **Governance Select Committee Thursday, 29th September, 2016**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Governance Select Committee**, which will be held at:

**Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping  
on Thursday, 29th September, 2016  
at 7.15 pm .**

**Glen Chipp  
Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

M Jenkins (01992 56 4607) [mjenkins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:mjenkins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

#### **Members:**

Councillors N Avey (Chairman), G Chambers (Vice-Chairman), D Dorrell, L Hughes, S Jones, S Kane, H Kauffman, M McEwen, L Mead, B Rolfe, D Stallan, B Surtees, H Whitbread and D Wixley

**SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE:**

**18:15**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

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

**3. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 8)**

(Director of Governance) To agree the notes of the meeting of the Select Committee held on 5 July 2016.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

In considering whether to declare a pecuniary or a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to

paragraph 9 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a non-pecuniary interest in any matter before an OS 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 9 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 9 - 12)**

(Chairman / Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed the Terms of Reference of this Committee. This is attached along with an ongoing work programme. Members are asked at each meeting to review both documents.

**6. REVIEW OF ELECTIONS AND EU REFERENDUM (Pages 13 - 18)**

(Returning Officer) To consider the attached report.

**7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2016/17 - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE (Pages 19 - 38)**

(Director of Governance) To consider the attached report and appendices.

**8. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2016/17 - QUARTER 1 PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 39 - 44)**

(Director of Governance) To consider the attached report and appendix.

**9. ANNUAL EQUALITY INFORMATION REPORT 2016 (Pages 45 - 66)**

(Director of Governance) To consider the attached report and appendix.

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

To consider which reports are ready to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the select committee will be held on Tuesday 29 November 2016 at 7.15p.m. in Committee Room 1.

**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 Stellan (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.



## GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

### TERMS OF REFERENCE 2016/17

**Title:** Governance Select Committee

**Status:** Select Committee

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of the services and functions of the Governance Directorate;
2. To develop a programme of work each year, informed by relevant service aims and member priorities, to ensure that the services and functions of the Communities Directorate are appropriate and responsive to the needs of residents, service users and others;
3. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet or a relevant Portfolio Holder, and to report and make recommendations directly to the Committee, the Cabinet or such Portfolio Holder as appropriate;
4. To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives on the services and functions of the Communities Directorate and any implications for the Council's residents, service users and others, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers, insofar as they relate to the services and functions of the Communities Directorate, to help develop appropriate policy;
7. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Communities Directorate, against adopted key performance indicators and identified areas of concern;
8. To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Communities Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny, for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
9. To recommend the establishment of task and finish panels to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary, in order to undertake any activity within these terms of reference.

**Chairman:** Councillor N Avey

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## Governance Select Committee (Chairman – Councillor N Avey)

### Work Programme 2016/17

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Meetings
(1) Review of the Elections May and June 2016	29 September 2016	Review of the processes for the EU Referendum, District Council and parish Council Elections	5 July 2016; 29 September; 29 November; 31 January 2017; and 4 April
(2) Review of Public Consultations	5 July 2016	Annual Review - <b>COMPLETED</b>	
(3) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2015/16 - Outturn	5 July 2016	Governance indicators only - <b>COMPLETED</b>	
(4) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2016/17 - Quarterly Performance Monitoring	Q1 – 29 September 2016 Q2 – 29 November 2016 Q3 – 4 April 2017	Governance indicators only.	
(5) Development Management Chair and Vice-Chair's Meeting	TBA	To receive feedback from meetings of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Area Planning and District Development Management Committees.	
(6) Equality Objectives 2012-2016 - Outturn	5 July 2016	<b>COMPLETED</b>	
(7) Equality Objectives 2016-2020 - 6 monthly reporting	Q2 – 29 November 2016	Q4 at June 2017 meeting.	
(8) Annual Equality Information Report 2016	29 September 2016		

(9) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16 - Outturn	5 July 2016	Governance actions only - <b>COMPLETED</b>	
(10) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17- Quarterly reporting	Q1 – 29 September 2016 Q2 – 29 November 2016 Q3 – 4 April 2017	Governance actions only.	
(11) Review of the Operation of the Council's Petitions Scheme	29 November 2017		
(12) Analysis of Compliments and Complaints procedures data in identifying trends	TBA		
(13) Review of enforcement activity across the services of the Governance Directorate	4 April 2017	This item will include Planning Enforcement but corporate and benefit fraud as well, within the Governance remit.	
(14) Invitation to Essex County Council Highways for a single item meeting to discuss their consultation work on District planning applications	TBA	This particular meeting will be held in the Council Chamber	
(15) Building Control	TBA		

## **Report to the Governance Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 29 September 2016**

**Subject:** Elections and EU Referendum 2016 – Lessons Learnt Report



### **Officer Contact for further Information:**

Glen Chipp (Returning Officer) (01992 564080)  
Simon Hill (01992 56 4249)  
Wendy MacLeod (01992 56 4023)

**Democratic Services Officer:**  
Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) To consider a review of the management of the following:**
  - (i) the Police and Crime Commissioner, District and Parish Elections 5 May 2016;**  
**and**
  - (ii) European Union referendum – 23 June 2016**
- (2) To recommend to the Returning Officer any changes to procedure for future elections and referenda.**

### **Introduction**

#### **Summary**

1. This report discusses the planning processes and implementation of the following elections held on 5 May 2016:
  - (a) The election of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex;
  - (b) 21 District Council wards, one was uncontested and two in one ward caused by a resignation; and
  - (c) 11 contested Parish Council wards.

And also looks at the running of the European Union Referendum on 23 June 2016.

2. In relation to the PCC election, Colchester Borough Council were the lead authority for Essex and for the EU Referendum, Chelmsford City Council were the regional hub. The other elections were the responsibility of Glen Chipp as Returning Officer.
3. The report outlines that, in the opinion of the Returning Officer, processes were generally followed effectively. The report reviews issues that have occurred this year and are reported in more detail below. The Elections have been reviewed by the Elections Planning Group and issues identified have been included within this report.

## **Commentary**

4. This year has seen a huge amount of work carried out by electoral staff in running a triple election, a referendum with a particularly high turnout and having to respond to an upsurge in registration due to national campaigns.
5. The Returning Officer and a team of officers met regularly since September 2015 in order to plan effectively for the Election and to ensure that the processes were undertaken at the appropriate times. A Project Plan and a Risk Register for the combined elections and separately for the referendum were prepared, reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

## **Registration/Publicity Issues**

6. At 1 December 2015, on the publication of the electoral register, the Districts register held xx electors. Again this year the authority had chosen to pay for a second confirmation letter in January 2016 setting out those registered in each property. This was encouraged by the Cabinet Office but only part funded. The additional confirmation letter had the effect of prompting many changes to the IER register. This further Household Notification Letter (HNL) may be repeated subject to funding being available.
7. There was a national campaign for the registration deadline which publicised the opportunity of registering online. The message to those intending to vote, particularly at the Referendum in June was too simplistic. The Electoral Commission publicity campaign made many voters think that they had to register again to be able to vote in the referendum. Experience of this publicity was that people that were already registered did so again causing officers in Elections to undertake many 100's of unnecessary deletions of duplicate registrations at a time when planning and implementation of the referendum was in full flow.
8. The Public Relations Section undertook a sustained publicity campaign through registration deadlines and during the run-up to the election days encouraging registration and voting. One of the Council's Presiding Officers was interviewed by BBC Essex on the day before the EU Referendum on his role and his recollection of working on the previous EU referendum in 1975.
9. There were repeated problems and delays with the issue of verification file processing from the Government Portal. Failure of the Government portal in the immediate period before the registration deadline led to an extension to the registration deadline being rushed through parliament using secondary legislation and had a knock on effect for register production and numbering. 1200 attempts at registration were made on the last day and 500 more on the day extension, most duplicating previous registrations.

## **Pre-elections/Printing issues**

10. A candidate pack was again sent with every nomination form but the candidates evening was poorly attended, officers are not sure why but believe that it is worthwhile exercise to offer the opportunity to candidates and agents to ask questions about the elections process. A question for members may be: What are candidates looking for?
11. A Town Council Candidate in Loughton stood in two wards, one application was not withdrawn by deadline and as a result both nominations were invalid.
12. All of the local election papers for May were printed by the Council's Reprographics Section which again provided an excellent service bearing in mind the tight timescale for printing. The papers for both the PCC election and EU referendum were printed externally by SCI Printing with no problem. No printing errors were found except a couple of book splits, found in

checking and easily rectified. District, Parish and Town Council Ballots were printed by Reprographics using the procedure used last year whereby backs of papers were pre-printed prior to annual Council Tax billing. All books were hand checked by senior elections staff. Ward names and ballot numbers were printed on the book cover so that PO's could easily check them when issuing, this worked well and no errors in issuing occurred.

13. The use of a commonly used name of the same candidate in two wards was not picked up at ballot paper draft and checking stages (the candidate was standing in two parish and one district ward) and ballot papers were printed without using the commonly used name and postal votes had been despatched before the error was spotted. Officers have subsequently reviewed the checking process.
14. Once the error was realised, advice was sought from the Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators and Council's Solicitor. The Returning Officer determined that an appropriate response was to write to all postal vote holders advising them that they could contact the Election Office and have their Postal ballot reissued should the new information have changed the manner of their voting. Additionally officers held back the opening and scanning of those postal vote returns to a later point in the elections process to ensure that any cancelled votes were not admitted to the voting stream.
15. Additionally staff at effected stations were able to advise of the change through polling stations on the day. No requests to reissue were received but a very small number of complaints about the waste of money involved in sending letters were received. The Electoral Commission has subsequently agreed that the Returning Officer met national performance standards. The Electoral Commission will, in due course, publish their report on the conduct of the national elections and a meeting with Commission Officers is scheduled for October at which any issues can be discussed.
16. A national test for the EU Referendum was held on 25 May 2016 from 8pm until Midnight. The purpose was to test the communications and national count system from the count centre location. Night staff at the school kept officers supplied with tea for the duration. Problems of repeated crashing of this system that evening were fortunately not present on 23 June 2016.

## **Postal voting**

17. Postal voting continues to grow in popularity:
  - 8,700 postal packs were sent out for May on 20 April, 250 of those (one team) had an issue error and had to be reissued. 5874 packs were returned and counted. A 67.5% return rate.
  - 10,200 (1,500 more than May) postal packs were sent out on 27 May for EU referendum with no problems. A further issue of 1,850 were sent out on 10 June following the close of postal applications. Of these 11069 were ultimately returned and counted, a 91.9% return rate.
  - There were a low number of ballots rejected at scanning stage but there were a number where the voter had failed to enter their date of birth correctly rather than evidence of any fraudulent activity.
  - Officers had a minor issue with scanner 2 in May which wouldn't read the barcode on some of the returned Postal Voting Statement's. This machine was looked at between May and June and performed much better in June.
  - There were a number of incidents of postal packs not being delivered by Royal Mail and these had to re-issued.
  - A Postal sweep at 9pm at the EU referendum delivered only 4 postal packs to the count centre. Officers consider this a waste of resources and could only be justified if paid for by central government grant and by their request.

## **Staffing**

18. The levels of staffing for polling stations, verification and counts were adequate. However, staffing for June was more problematic as it is generally a holiday period.
19. Officers from Democratic Services and other sections provided much needed to support to Electoral Services Staff by helping with enquiries about voting and registration.
20. Assumptions made about the level of staff required for the issue and opening of postal votes proved correct as these procedures were all completed in good time. Directors were helpful in making officers available for all of the processes. Staff attended effective training sessions for each stage of the process in accordance with the project plan.

## **Polling Stations**

21. At both elections, and indeed despite the weather in June, all polling stations opened on time and operated all day without problem and procedures planned for queues at close of poll were not required to be invoked on either date.
22. There are a number of issues with Polling Stations:
  - Due to the closure of the Railway Hotel, Lower Sheering there is no polling station in lower sheering. At both elections electors attended the polling station in Sheering. There was a low turnout in May but this was to be expected as only election was for the PCC. At the EU referendum, turnout was on a par with the rest of the district. The local ward Councillor has made representations about the matter however there are no obvious public buildings in this area. It is suggested that the Parish Council could help to establish whether there are any properties that could be used as a polling station
  - The new Polling Station at the Willingale Road Allotments has a good location but the building is not ideal. A Local Councillor, Councillor Girling has suggested a function room at the Cottage Loaf Public House which should be investigated. A further suggestion of the Kingdom Hall in Willingale Road has also been made
  - At the St Giles Hall, Nazeing a short power outage was suffered during the day but was fixed before nightfall.
  - At St Winifred's Church Hall, Chigwell flooding and a leaking roof due to rain fall which made access to the Hall and Kitchen difficult.
  - At Upshire Village Hall it has been noted that the Disabled ramp needs repair/replacement and Officers have been in contact with the Hall regarding this.
  - At Whitebridge School, Loughton the Returning Officer has received a letter indicating that the school is undergoing refurbishment during 2017 - 2018 and further discussion on the potential solution will be necessary.
  - Loughton Town Council Offices, Buckingham Court. As the Town Council are moving to Loughton Library shortly there will be a need to find an alternative location for this station. It would be possible to relocate voters to the existing Grosvenor Hall station.
23. No further observations regarding polling stations were received during post-election consultations.

## **Polling day issues**

24. All the Districts Polling stations were operational for both the May and the June events. Heavy rain on 22 June and 23 June caused concerns for some rural stations with localised flooding on a lot of rural roads. However, staff managed to open all stations on time. The weather did



make access to some polling stations difficult during the early part of the day. During the course of the day contingency arrangements, using Council 4x4's, were drawn up with the assistance of the Council's Contingency Planning Officer, to collect staff and boxes from some areas but rain subsided during the day and these arrangements were ultimately not required.

25. The Elections Office was busy on both days, especially on 23 June, it was apparent that many of those calling about voting either had never voted, didn't know where to vote or how the process worked. The only recorded polling station incident was an electoral agent being rude to staff in a polling station in May and failing to identify themselves as an agent. This will be picked up in subsequent elections communications to agents and candidates.
26. The opportunity was taken this year to purchase some larger ballot boxes. These were able to take a larger number of papers and saved issuing multiple boxes to some of the stations and were better from a manual handling point of view. Finances permitting, officers will look to increase their use and to look at some wear and tear issues with booths and other voting equipment during the year.

### **Verification and Counts**

27. In May verification of District, Parish and PCC votes took place on Friday 6 May 2016 at Theydon Bois Village Hall. This commenced at 8.30 am and was completed by 11.30 am. We had been required by the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) to declare the verification by noon. Additionally we had been directed to commence the first stage PCC count at 1.00pm. This was completed by 2.15. As no individual candidate polled more than 50% of the vote at this stage a second stage count was required and this second stage PCC count was completed at 5.15 pm. The Returning Officer had determined that District and Parish/Town Counts should be held over to the Saturday and this proved to be the correct decision as these counts could not have commenced until 6.00pm.
28. The counting of District/Town/Parish ballot papers in May and the EU Referendum count in June took place at Debden Park High School. The school, on both occasions, were particularly helpful to staff. This larger hall was required for these elections to enable a greater number of Count staff to be employed. It is the view of officers that where a single type election is concerned that this location is currently the best option. This year for the District Elections, officers hired-in PA equipment as announcements had been previously identified as an issue for those attending.
29. In May, the first result was declared at 9.17 am and the last at 12.00 (subjected to a recount)
30. In June counting started as soon as the polling finished with postal votes. The process went smoothly using a 'mini count' system. Officers had, by analysis, attempted to balance the likely number of votes on each table and this worked well in practice. The districts verification figure was supplied by 1.15 am and the final District result transmitted at 3.25 am.
31. At the last elections the Returning Officer requested officers to look at replacing some manual processes by the Accountancy Officers. This year, on both dates, a bespoke spreadsheet was used effectively to simplify procedures at the Count. It is intended that this be used at the County Council Elections in 2017.
32. The Council's Public Relations and Marketing Officer supported by the Website Officer ensured that appropriate publicity was made available at all stages with links to the Council's website. Social media was also used to spread the message. The Council provided effective media facilities at the Count.

## **Post-Election Consultations/Comments**

33. Every Agent has been written to asking for comments in relation to the running of the Election. Members have also been asked to comment via the Bulletin. By the date of writing this report only the following comments have been received:

“In the elections I acted as Agent for Councillor Boyce and as far as I am concerned the whole operation was trouble free. The only slight blip was caused by confusion between Tony and I regarding Tickets for the Count, which you kindly resolved for us. Our thanks once again. - Brian Rolfe”

“Waltham Abbey North East Ward, staff manning the polling station were efficient pleasant and helpful , which made the polling process that day for the Cllr up for election and the community uncomplicated well done. - Lillian Mitchell”

## **Future Elections and Lessons Learned**

34. In May 2017 there will be County Council elections only. In May 2018 there are solely District elections. Lessons learnt will be fed back into the process for next year which begins shortly. It should be noted that in 2020 the District currently has scheduled quadruple elections (Parliamentary on a new boundary configuration, PCC, District and Parish) on the same day.
35. Save the error in the use of the full name of a candidate instead of the commonly used name, there were no key issues arising at the May 2016 elections. Generally all practices were completed successfully.

## **Boundary Commission Proposals**

36. Members may have recently seen the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission on the parliamentary boundaries. This currently proposes no change for the Epping Forest Constituency but does make proposals to both Harlow and Brentwood and Ongar. Officers will kept a watching brief on the process and will bring reports before members if necessary.

## **Electoral Commission Reports**

37. The Electoral Commission has also recently published their reports into the May and June events. As part of their recommendations they raise the issue of elections scheduled for May 2020. That year currently sees, Local District and Parish elections combined with PCC and a Parliamentary election based on the new constituency boundaries. This will be a challenge to deliver and potentially confusing for the voter due to different franchises for each election and the prospect of different voting systems at the same election (they also coincide with metropolitan elections that year). The Government have been asked to look the schedule of elections that year. These will need very careful planning.
38. Members of the Committee are asked to provide feedback to the Returning Officer for future elections.



**Report to: Governance Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 29 September 2016**

**Portfolio:** Governance and Development Management (Councillor R. Bassett)

**Subject:** Key Performance Indicators 2016/17 - Quarter 1 Performance

**Officer contact for further information:** Barbara Copson (01992 564042)

**Democratic Services Officer:** Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Select Committee reviews Q1 performance in relation to the key performance indicators within its areas of responsibility.

### **Executive Summary:**

The Local Government Act 1999 requires that the Council make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As part of the duty to secure continuous improvement, a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) relevant to the Council's services and key objectives, are adopted each year by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. Performance against the KPIs is monitored on a quarterly basis by Management Board and overview and scrutiny to drive improvement in performance and ensure corrective action is taken where necessary.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The KPIs provide an opportunity for the Council to focus attention on how specific areas for improvement will be addressed, and how opportunities will be exploited and better outcomes delivered. It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review and monitor performance against the key performance indicators to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under performance.

### **Other Options for Action:**

No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review KPI performance and to consider corrective action where necessary could have negative implications for judgements made about the Council's progress, and might mean that opportunities for improvement are lost.

### **Report:**

1. 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 are 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 is 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.

2. Progress in respect of each of the KPIs is reviewed by the relevant Portfolio Holder, Management Board, and overview and scrutiny at the conclusion of each quarter. This report provides an overview of all KPIs and includes in detail those indicators which fall within the areas of responsibility of the Governance Select Committee
3. A headline end of Q1 performance summary in respect of the KPIs falling within the Governance Select Committee's areas of responsibility for 2016/17, together with a detailed performance report for each of these indicators, is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. Attached at Appendix 2 are the Improvement plans for GOV005 (Other planning) (%), GOV007 (Appeals – officers) (%), and GOV008 (Appeals – members) (%) which failed to reach target for the quarter.

### **Key Performance Indicators 2016/17 - Quarter 1 Performance**

4. The overall position for **all** thirty-seven (37) KPIs at the end of the Quarter 1, was as follows:
  - (a) 25 (68%) indicators achieved target;
  - (b) 12 (32%) indicators did not achieve target, although
  - (c) 3 (8%) of these indicators performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator.
  - (d) 28 (76%) of indicators are currently anticipated to achieve year-end target and a further 2 (5%) are uncertain whether they will achieve year-end target.
5. **Governance Select Committee indicators** – Five (5) of the Key Performance Indicators fall within the Governance Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at Q1 for these five (5) indicators, was as follows:
  - (a) 2 (40%) indicators achieved target;
  - (b) 3 (60%) indicators did not achieve target, however
  - (c) 2 (40%) of these KPI's performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator
  - (d) 4 (80%) of indicators are currently anticipated to achieve year-end target, and a further 1 (20%) indicator is uncertain whether it will achieve year-end target.
6. The 'amber' performance status used in the KPI report identifies indicators that have missed the agreed target for the quarter, but where performance is within an agreed tolerance or range. The KPI tolerances were agreed by Management Board when targets for the KPIs were set in February 2016.
7. The Select Committee is requested to review Q1 performance for the KPIs within its areas of responsibility. The full set of KPIs was also considered by Management Board on 3 August 2016 and the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 15 September 2016.

**Resource Implications:** none for this report

**Legal and Governance Implications:** none for this report; however performance management of key activities is important to the achievement of value for money.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:** none for this report

**Consultation Undertaken:** Relevant Select Committees and the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee.






**Background Papers:** KPI submissions held by the Performance Improvement Unit.

**Impact Assessments:**

***Risk Management:*** none for this report

***Equality:*** none for this report.

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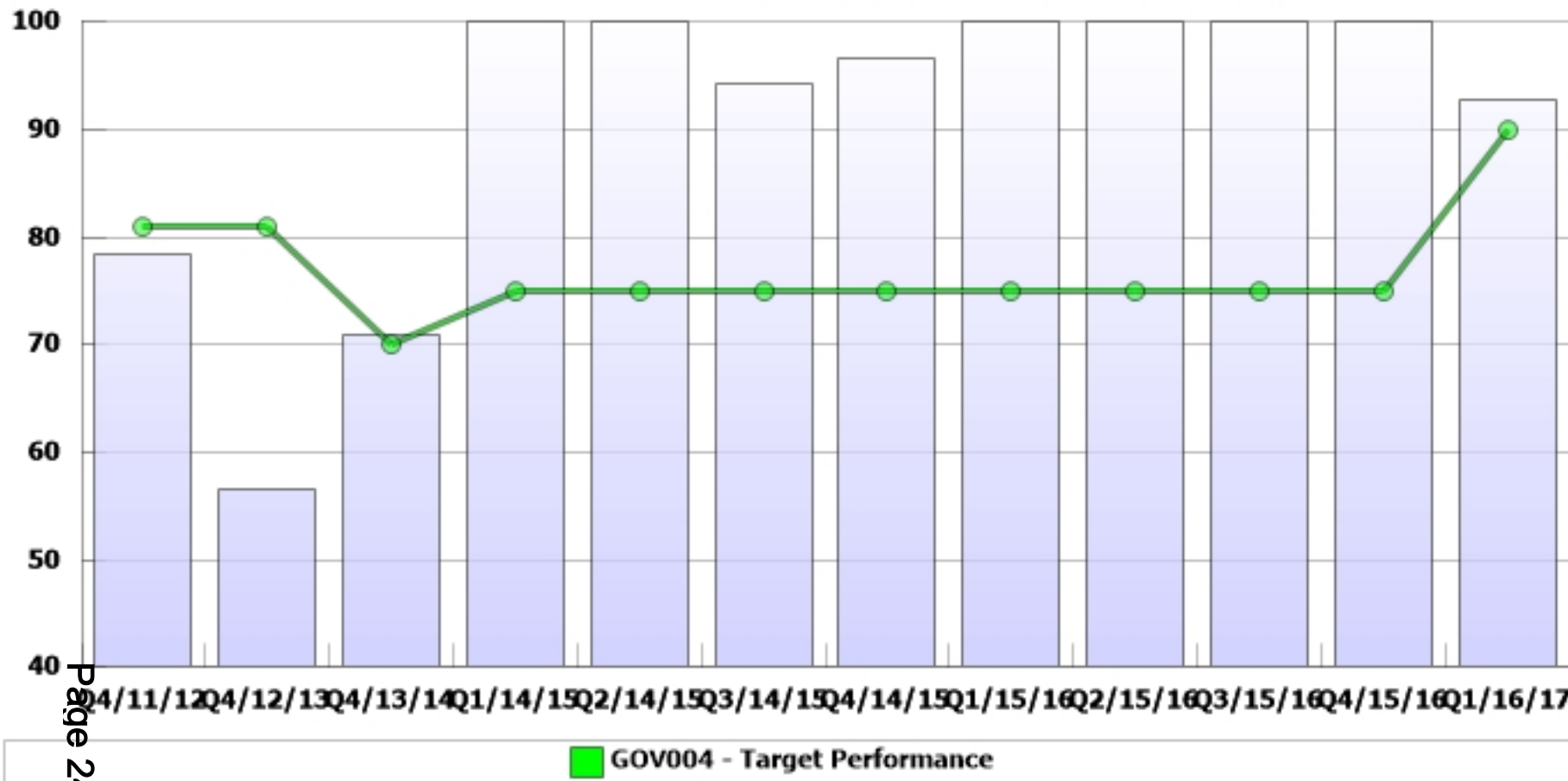
Quarterly Indicators		Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Is year-end target likely to be achieved?
		Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual	
<b>Governance</b>										
GOV004	(Major planning) (%)	90.00%	92.86%		90.00%		90.00%		90.00%	Yes
GOV005	(Minor planning) (%)	90.00%	88.68%		90.00%		90.00%		90.00%	Yes
GOV006	(Other planning) (%)	94.00%	94.69%		94.00%		94.00%		94.00%	Yes
GOV007	(Appeals - officers) (%)	20.0%	21.4%		20.0%		20.0%		20.0%	Uncertain
GOV008	(Appeals - members) (%)	50.0%	57.1%		50.0%		50.0%		50.0%	Yes

**GOV004 What percentage of major planning applications were processed within 13 weeks or extension of time date?**

**Additional Information:** This indicator ensures that local planning authorities determine major planning applications in a timely manner (within thirteen weeks).

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564042.

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q1/16/17	90.00%	92.86%
Q4/15/16	75.00%	100.00%
Q3/15/16	75.00%	100.00%
Q2/15/16	75.00%	100.00%
Q1/15/16	75.00%	100.00%



**Annual Target:** 2016/17 - 90.00%  
2015/16 - 75.00%

Indicator of good performance:  
A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes



**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q1 2016/17) Major type applications represent only a small number of the overall number of planning applications received, but they are more complex and generally are reported to planning committees, so deadlines for decisions are tight. Because of this, the performance can be volatile, but with 13 out of 14 decided in time, the target has been achieved.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

(Q1 2016/17) -

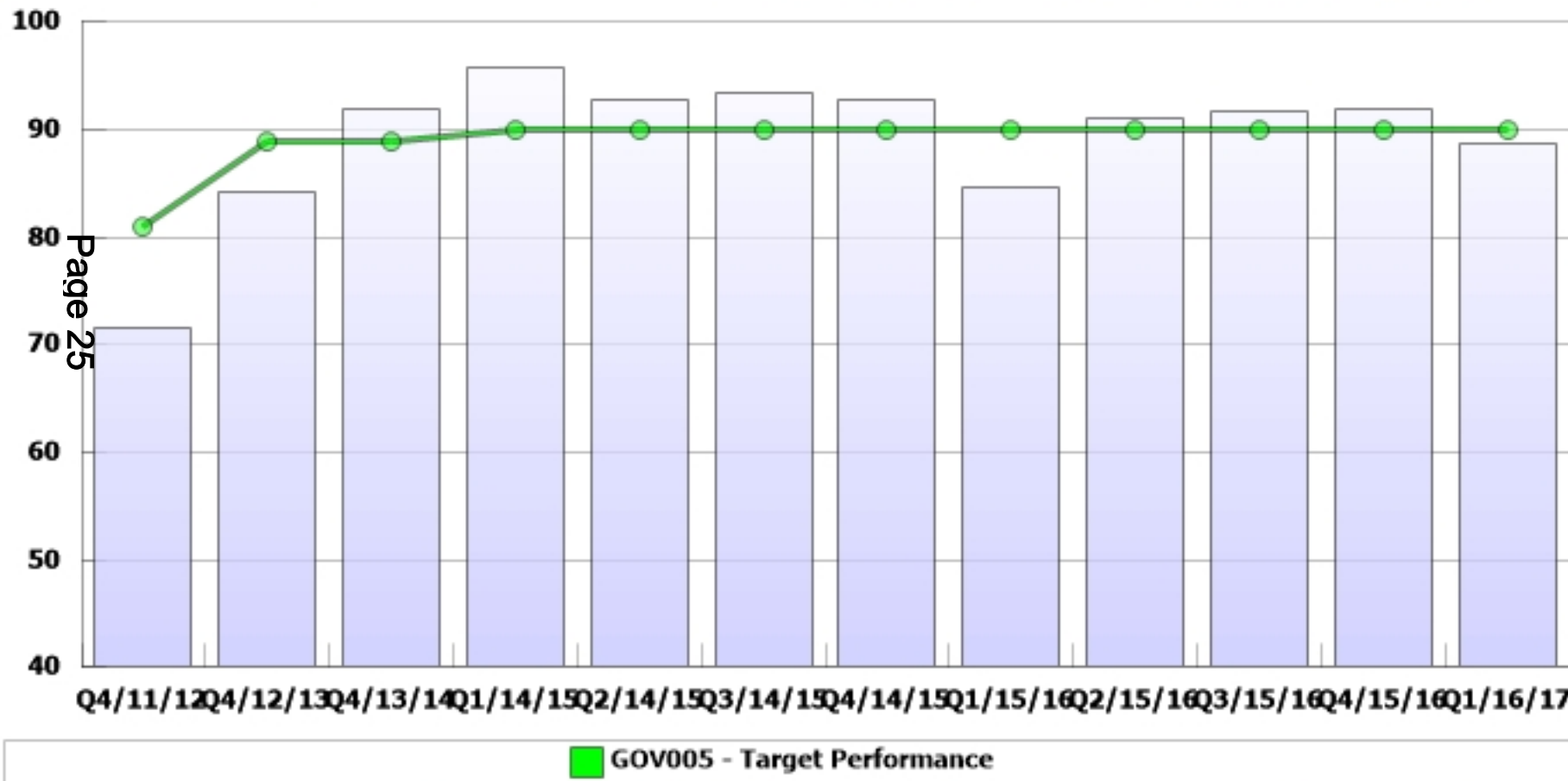


**GOV005 What percentage of minor planning applications were processed within 8 weeks or extension of time date?**

**Additional Information:** This indicator ensures that local planning authorities determine 'minor' planning applications in a timely manner (within eight weeks).

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564042.

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q1/16/17	90.00%	88.68%	X
Q4/15/16	90.00%	92.05%	✓
Q3/15/16	90.00%	91.67%	✓
Q2/15/16	90.00%	91.13%	✓
Q1/15/16	90.00%	84.62%	X

Annual 2016/17 - 90.00% (delegated)  
 Target: 2015/16 - 90.00% (delegated)

Indicator of good performance:  
 A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes



**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q1 2016/17) - This covers planning applications that include 1 to 9 dwellings/ pitches per application as well as offices, light industry, general industry, storage, warehousing or retail floorspace under 10,000sq m or 1 hectare and other minor developments. 94 out of 106 applications were made in time, the lower figure at this stage is because of the gap of 4 weeks between committee meetings.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

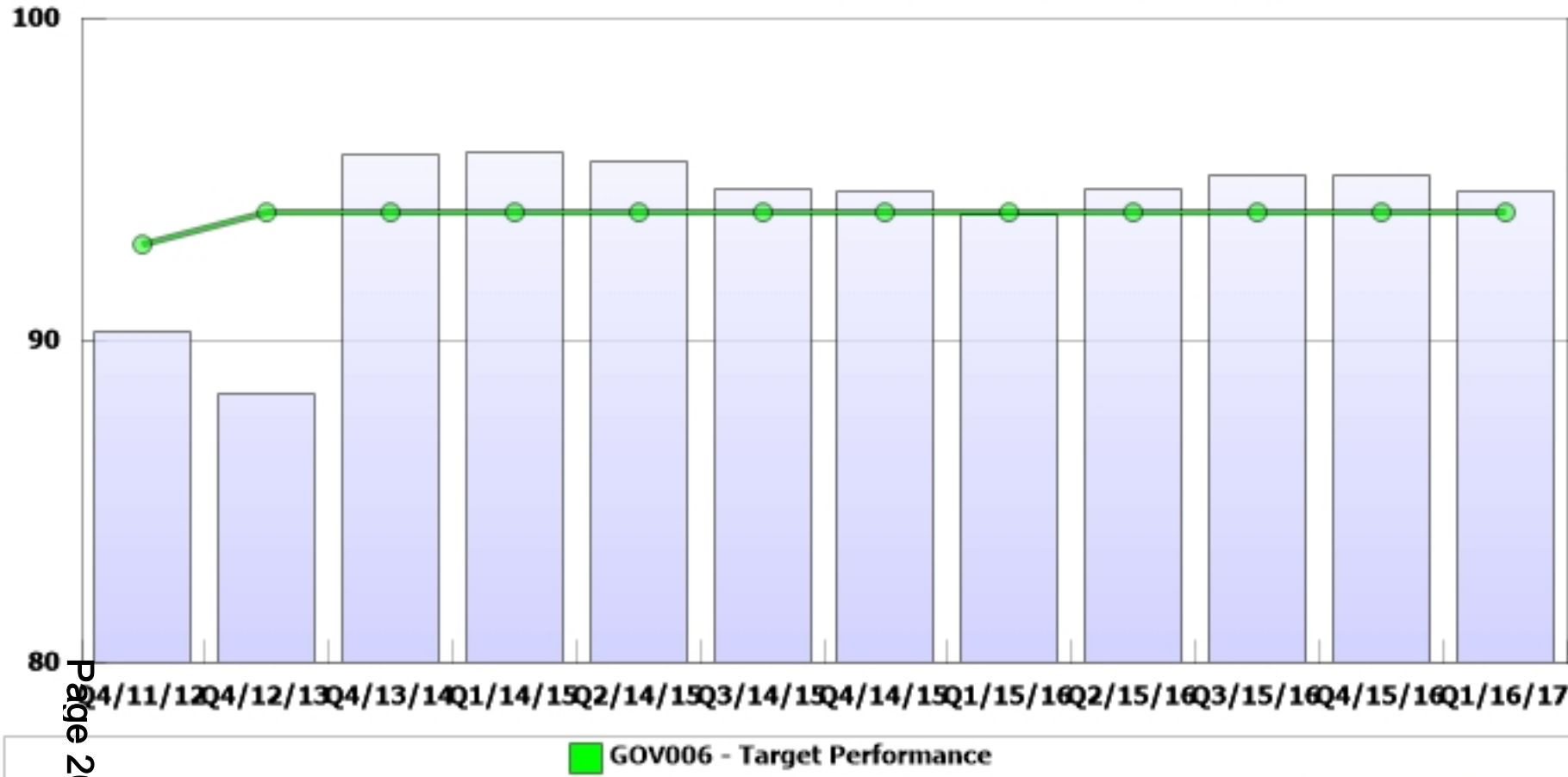
(Q1 2016/17) - The figure is within tolerance and officers will be reminded of the need to seek an extension of time from applicants where planning applications go to planning committee.

**GOV006 What percentage of other planning applications were processed within 8 weeks or extension of time date?**

**Additional Information:** This indicator ensures that local planning authorities determine 'other' planning applications in a timely manner (within eight weeks).

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564042.

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q1/16/17	94.00%	94.69%	✓
Q4/15/16	94.00%	95.17%	✓
Q3/15/16	94.00%	95.20%	✓
Q2/15/16	94.00%	94.72%	✓
Q1/15/16	94.00%	93.96%	✗

Annual Target: 2016/17 - 94.00% (delegated)  
 Target: 2015/16 - 94.00% (delegated)  
 Indicator of good performance: A higher percentage is good  
 ↑ is the direction of improvement



Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?  
 Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q1 2016/17) - GOV006 represents the highest number out of all planning application types decided, which includes household extensions. 321 out of 339 applications were decided in time in this category and meets the target.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

(Q1 2016/17) -

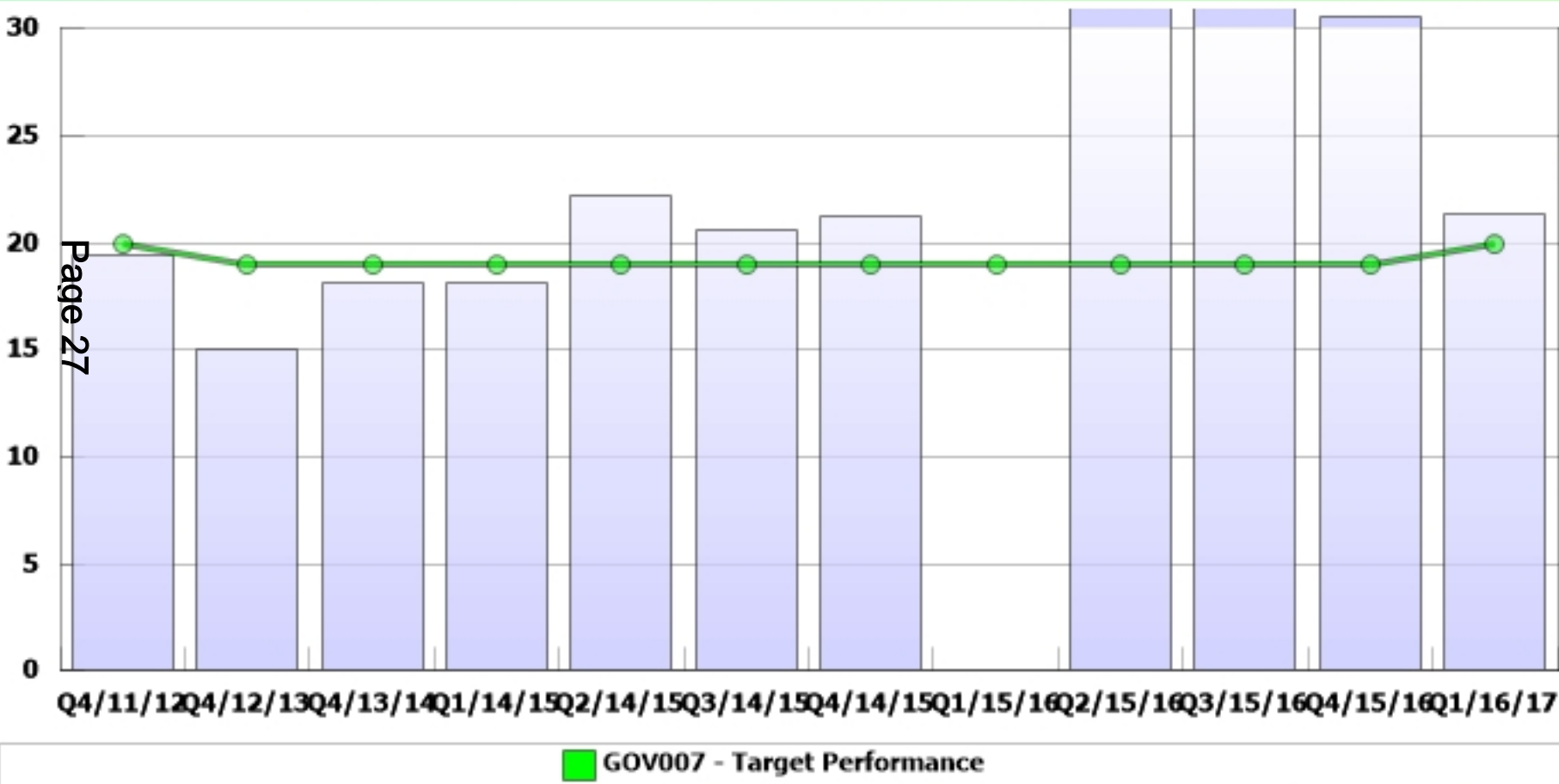


**GOV007 What percentage of planning applications recommended by planning officers for refusal were overturned and granted permission following an appeal?**

**Additional Information:** This indicator is expressed as a percentage of the no. of appeals determined and seeks to assess the levels of applications that may be refused in order to meet development control performance targets. It measures the performance of only Officer Recommendations for refusal of planning permission

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564042.

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q1/16/17	20.0%	21.4%	✗
Q4/15/16	19.0%	30.6%	✗
Q3/15/16	19.0%	33.3%	✗
Q2/15/16	19.0%	31.8%	✗
Q1/15/16	19.0%	0.0%	✓

**Annual Target:** 2016/17 - 20.0%  
 2015/16 - 19.0%  
**Indicator of good performance:**  
 A lower percentage is good  
 ↓ is the direction of improvement

▲  
 Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?  
 Uncertain

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q1 2016/17) - Of the 14 appeal decisions resulting from officer recommendations to refuse planning permission, 3 were allowed on appeal, one of which was a complex gypsy and traveller application.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

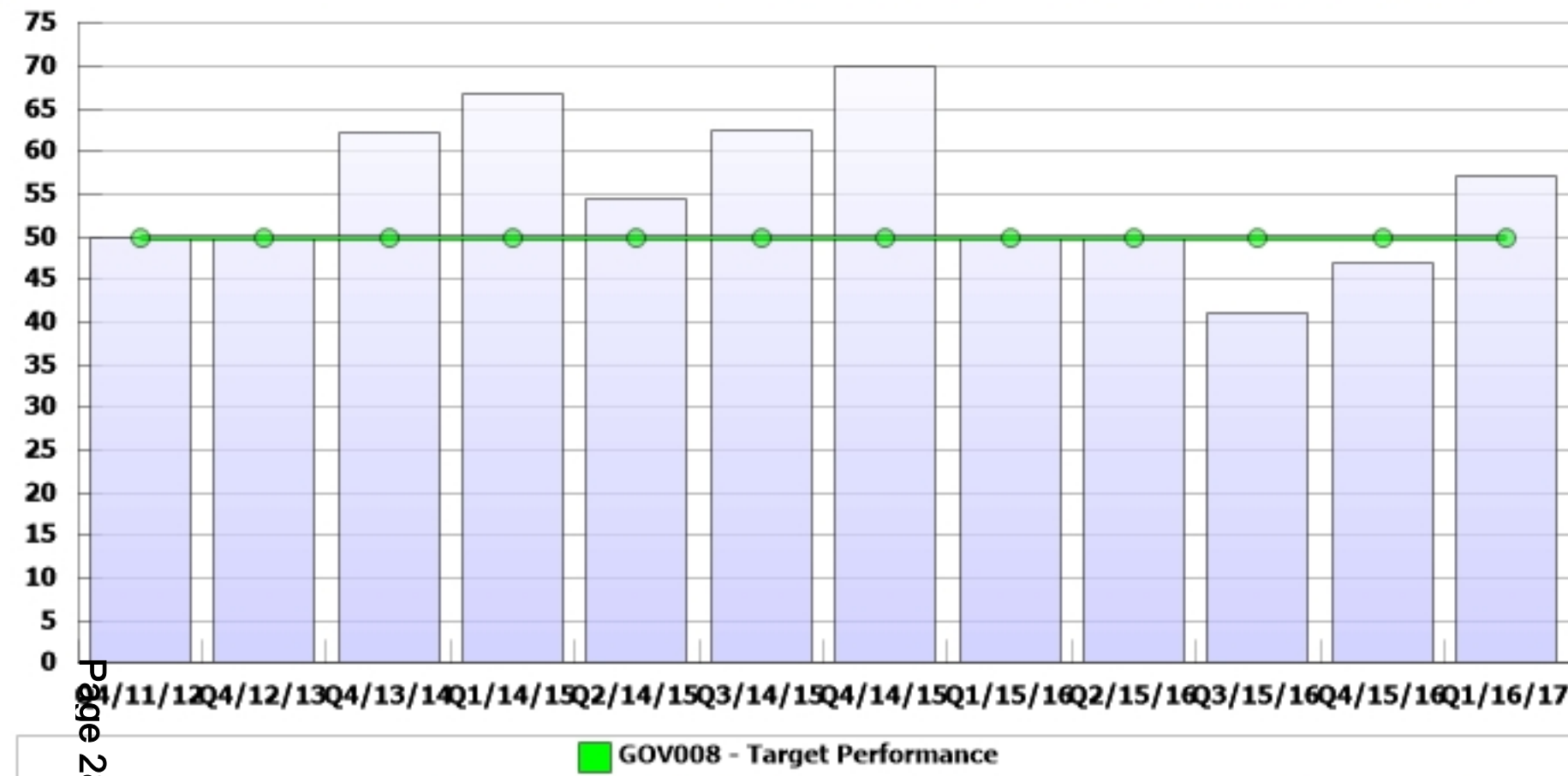
(Q1 2016/17) - Slightly over performance target and officers will consider weight given to third party objections, which were a factor in the 3 appeals cases initially being refused planning permission.

**GOV008 What percentage of planning applications refused by Council Members against the planning officer's recommendations were granted permission to appeal?**

**Additional Information:** This indicator is expressed as a percentage of the no. of appeals determined and seeks to assess the levels of applications that may be refused in order to meet development control performance targets. It measures the performance of only Officer Recommendations for refusal of planning permission

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564042.

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q1/16/17	50.0%	57.1%
Q4/15/16	50.0%	46.9%
Q3/15/16	50.0%	41.2%
Q2/15/16	50.0%	50.0%
Q1/15/16	50.0%	50.0%

✘  
✔  
✔  
✔  
✔

Annual Target: 2016/17 - 50.0%  
 2015/16 - 50.0%  
 Indicator of good performance:  
 A lower percentage is good  
 ↓ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?  
 Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q1 2016/17) - Outside of tolerance, but low number of appeal decisions in this category. Members decisions to refuse planning permission by reversing officer recommendations on planning applications were supported on appeal in 3 out of 7 cases, but 57.14% (4 applications) were allowed and therefore outside of the target.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

(Q1 2016/17) - All 4 allowed were for additional housing where there were 3rd party objections. Planning Committees need to take account of all planning considerations including making the best use of previously developed land.



**GOV05 What percentage of minor planning applications were processed within 8 weeks or extension of time date?**

Outturn			Target
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
91.97%	92.90%	92.05%	90.00%

**Responsible Officer**

Colleen O'Boyle  
Director of Governance

Improvement Action	Target Dates	Key Measures / Milestones
Planning application case officer to seek agreement where necessary from applicant/agent for extension of time and make decision within agreed time.	Specific to each planning application and therefore as and when required.	Final decision made in 8 week target time or by the new extension of time date.
Before a committee meeting takes place, Lead officer of the relevant planning committee to anticipate need for Member site visit so as to prevent Member deferral.	Specific to type and nature of application.	Through use of Democratic Services, Chairman of relevant planning committee contacted after the agenda is finalised.

Senior Officers in Development Management to regularly check and sign off delegated decisions made by case officers.	Daily, as and when required.	Decision Notice finalised no later than performance target date.
AD Governance (Development Management) to keep record of applications that miss their target and are close to 26 week return of planning fee deadline.	Weekly check.	One-to-one with case officer and act on reason so as to prevent it reoccurring.  Crystal report from Planning-M3 system to flag up applications approaching deadline (ready June 2016).
Review of Decision-making process by Q4	By Sept 2016  Oct 2016  Nov 2016  Dec 2016  Early 2017	Governance Select Cttee to have undertaken a review of Area Plan Cttees and scheme of officer delegation.  O & S to consider review  Review reported to Constitution Working Group  Report to Council  Change to Constitution
Streamline and review paid pre-planning application process to allow more time spent on assessing planning applications by Q3.	Sept 2016	Report to Governance Select Cttee.

Please detail any budget or resource implications of the improvement actions you have listed overleaf. Please quantify any additional resources which will be required to implement the improvements and detail how the additional resources will be allocated.

Two fixed-term Trainee Planning Officers from September 2016 to assist Development Control application work – Posts and budget approved from Development Control application income 2015-16.

Seek appropriate approval to retain current agency planning officer beyond June, to September 2016 given workload and establishment planning officer holidays, to be paid from DC Income surplus.

Please describe any contextual factors, internal or external, which may impact upon the ability to deliver the improvements listed.

Full complement of staff, particularly at planning application registration, assessment, recommendation and decision making stages, so as to limit any delay.

Applicant/agent refuses to agree extension of time beyond the 8 week date and in addition, if it goes beyond 26 weeks, the applicant/agent has a right to have the full planning application fee returned.

**GOV07 What percentage of planning applications recommended by planning officers for refusal were overturned and granted permission following an appeal?**

Outturn			Target
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
18.18%	21.3%	30.6%	20.00%

**Responsible Officer**

Colleen O'Boyle  
Director of Governance

Improvement Action	Target Dates	Key Measures / Milestones
Review Appeal Decisions at 6 months	17 June 2016 and November 2016	Member training in June, analyse key appeal decisions at Governance Select Cttee, 6 month report to Area Plans - resulting in improved appeal performance by Q4.
Planning officers refusal report state a way forward, if there is one, so as to encourage a resubmission under a new planning application rather than appeal.	Ongoing, review quarterly	Reduction in the number submitted and proportion of those appeal submitted being allowed.



Finely balanced planning applications decisions to be recommended for approval rather than refusal, particularly those decisions taken at officer delegated level.	As and when required.	Reduction in the number submitted and proportion of those appeal submitted being allowed.
Specialist witness used to defend Council decision on complex appeals	As and when required and within set budget	Improved appeal performance by Q4, particularly for gypsy & traveller related appeals.

**Please detail any budget or resource implications of the improvement actions you have listed overleaf. Please quantify any additional resources which will be required to implement the improvements and detail how the additional resources will be allocated.**

In respect of more complex planning appeal hearings or a public inquiries, there is a Professional Fees annual budget of £24,640, which, when required, pays for specialist advice to help the Council defend appeals. Such examples include gypsy and traveller appeals, agricultural related cases and highway refusals where there is no highway objection from Essex County Council. Each year, there has been a need to use this consultancy resource, including, where necessary, helping Legal Services pay towards barrister fees.

**Please describe any contextual factors, internal or external, which may impact upon the ability to deliver the improvements listed.**

Full staff resource within the Development Control section is required to produce appeal statements on a strict time limit and attend hearing etc. All senior planning officers in Development Control have had hearing and public inquiry training.

Where external consultants are required to defend the Council's appeal, consultants who are used who are familiar with Epping Forest District and despite the narrow time parameters set by the Planning Inspectorate, this has proved successful in helping to defend the appeal.

The reliance on internal staff, again in specialist areas across the Council and Essex County Council, is invaluable.



**GOV08 What percentage of planning applications refused by Council Members against the planning officer's recommendation were granted permission to appeal?**

Outturn			Target
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
62.20%	70.00%	46.9%	50.00%

**Responsible Officer**

Colleen O'Boyle  
Director of Governance

Improvement Action	Target Dates	Key Measures / Milestones
Training for Members and review Appeal Decisions at 6 months	17 June 2016 and November 2016	Member training in June, analyse key appeal decisions at Governance Select Cttee, 6 month report to Area Plans - resulting in improved appeal performance by Q4.
Members continue to state whether there is a way forward after a planning application is refused, if there is one, so as to encourage a resubmission under a new planning application rather than appeal.	Ongoing, review quarterly	Reduction in the number submitted and proportion of those appeal submitted being allowed.

Feedback and analyse appeal decisions as part of Development Control Team meeting.	Monthly meetings	Improve appeal performance
Specialist witness used to defend Council decision on complex appeals	As and when required and within set budget	Improved appeal performance by Q4, particularly for gypsy & traveller related appeals.
Follow the recommendation of the planning officer's committee report and only overturn it to a refusal if presenting officer considers it may succeed on appeal.	Each committee meeting	Reduction in number of appeals and appeals allowed.

Please detail any budget or resource implications of the improvement actions you have listed overleaf. Please quantify any additional resources which will be required to implement the improvements and detail how the additional resources will be allocated.

In respect of more complex planning appeal hearings or a public inquiries, there is a Professional Fees annual budget of £24,640, which, when required, pays for specialist advice to help the Council defend appeals. Such examples include gypsy and traveller appeals, agricultural related cases and highway refusals where there is no highway objection from Essex County Council. Each year, there has been a need to use this consultancy resource, including, where necessary, helping Legal Services pay towards barrister fees.

Please describe any contextual factors, internal or external, which may impact upon the ability to deliver the improvements listed.

Full staff resource within the Development Control section is required to produce appeal statements on a strict time limit and attend hearing etc. All senior planning officers in Development Control have had hearing and public inquiry training.

Where external consultants are required to defend the Council's appeal, consultants who are used who are familiar with Epping Forest District and despite the narrow time parameters set by the Planning Inspectorate, this has proved successful in helping to defend the appeal.

The reliance on internal staff, again in specialist areas across the Council and Essex County Council, is invaluable.

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## SCRUTINY



### **Report to: Governance Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 29 September 2016**

**Portfolio:** Leader (Councillor C. Whitbread)

**Subject:** Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17 – Quarter 1 Progress

**Officer contact for further information:** Barbara Copson (01992 564042)

**Democratic Services Officer:** Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)

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#### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Committee review the first quarter (Q1) progress of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 in relation to its areas of responsibility; and
- (2) That the Committee identifies any actions arising from the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 Q1 within its areas of responsibility, which require in-depth scrutiny or further report on current progress.

#### **Executive Summary:**

The Corporate Plan is 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.

The Key Objectives are 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 contain a range of actions designed to achieve specific outcomes and are working documents and are therefore subject to change and development to ensure the actions remain relevant and appropriate, and to identify opportunities to secure further progress or improvement.

The Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 was agreed by the Cabinet in March 2016. Progress in relation to all actions and deliverables is reviewed by the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the appropriate Select Committee, on a quarterly basis.

#### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review progress against the key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under-performance.

Some actions have cross directorate responsibility. Where this is the case the most appropriate Select Committee is requested to consider the action. This report presents progress against the Key Action Plan for 2016/17 for actions most appropriately considered by the Governance Select Committee.

## Other Options for Action:

Actions with cross directorate responsibility could be considered by an alternative Select Committee, or not considered by the Select Committees.

## Report:

1. The Corporate Plan 2015-2020 is the Council's highest level strategic document. It sets the strategic direction for the authority for the five year lifetime of the Plan. It focuses on a number of key areas that the Council needs to focus on during that time and helps to prioritise resources to provide quality services and value for money. These key areas are known as the Corporate Aims and are supported by a set of Key Objectives which represent the Council's high-level initiatives and over-arching goals to achieve the Corporate Aims. The Key Objectives are in turn, delivered via an annual Key Action Plan.
2. The Key Action Plan 2016/17 is populated with actions or deliverables designed to secure progress against each of the Key Objectives during 2016/17. During the subsequent years in the lifetime of the Key Objectives, annual action plans will be developed which build on progress achieved during preceding years.
3. The annual action plans are working documents are subject to change and development to ensure that the actions remain relevant and appropriate, and to identify opportunities to secure further progress or improvement. The Leader of Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, is authorised to agree any further changes to Key Action Plans, following their approval by the Council.
4. Progress against the Key Action Plan is reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure the timely identification and implementation of appropriate further initiatives or corrective action where necessary. Quarter 1 progress against the individual actions of the 2016/17 Key Action Plan, is as below: In reporting progress, the following 'status' indicators have been applied to the to individual actions:

**Achieved (Green)** - specific deliverables or actions have been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets;

**On-Target (Green)** - specific deliverables or actions will be completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets;

**Under Control (Amber)** - specific deliverables or actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets, but completion/achievement will be secured by a revised target date (specified) or by year-end;

**Behind Schedule (Red)** - specific deliverables or actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets and completion/achievement may not be secured by year-end; and

**Pending (Grey)** - specific deliverables or actions cannot currently be fully completed or achieved, as they rely on the prior completion of other actions or are dependent on external factors outside the Council's control.

5. There are 50 actions **in total** for which progress updates for Q1 are as follows:
  - 32 (64%) of these actions have been 'Achieved' or are 'On Target'
  - 7 (14%) of these actions are 'Under Control'
  - 2 (4%) are 'Behind Schedule'
  - 9 (18%) are 'Pending'



8 actions fall within the areas of responsibility of the Governance Select Committee. At the end of Q1:

- 8 (100%) of these actions have been 'Achieved' or are 'On-Target'
- 0 (0%) of these actions are 'Under Control'
- 0 (0%) of these actions are 'Behind Schedule'
- 0 (0%) of these actions are 'Pending'

6. The Committee is requested to review the Q1 progress against Key Action Plan for 2016/17 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, and identify any actions that require more in-depth scrutiny or further progress reports.

7. This report was also considered by the Cabinet on 6 October 2016 and will be considered by the the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016

**Resource Implications:** None for this report.

**Legal and Governance Implications:** None for this report. Performance monitoring contributes to the delivery of value for money.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:** None for this report.

**Consultation Undertaken:** The performance information set out in this report has been submitted by each responsible service director.

**Background Papers:** Relevant documentation is held by responsible service directors.

**Impact Assessments:**

**Risk Management:** None for this report.

**Equality:** None for this report.

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**Aim (i) 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.**

Key Objective (i)(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.

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
1) Liaise with the Communities Directorate on Housing related / led projects is constructive and productive to retain Building Control project work in-house	Governance	30-Apr-16	Achieved	(Q1 2016/17) - We continue to enjoy a constructive and responsive relationship between directorates and building income continues to exceed budget.
3) Estates colleagues to include use of the in-house building control service in their standard negotiations	Governance	30-Apr-16	On Target	(Q1 2016/17) - The directorates continue to liaise to embed the inclusion of the in-house service in negotiations.
6) Identify and undertake measures to raise the profile and successes of the in-house building control team.	Governance	30-Apr-16	On Target	(Q1 2016/17) - The Staples Road Junior School in Loughton was shortlisted for the Local Authority Building Control awards held in Cambridge and the team continues to promote partnership working resulting in healthy income levels.
7) Participate in the renegotiations of the contracts for the provision of on-line library services	Governance	31-Mar-17	Achieved	(Q1 2016/17) - As part of PLP the legal service continues to benefit from reduced online library services in a form of savings.

**Aim (iii) 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.**

Key Objective (iii)(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.

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
2) Implement and/or produce an Implementation Plan for, the agreed proposals for improving customer contact.	Management Board	31-Mar-17	On Target	(Q1 2016/17) - The customer contact project team continues to make good progress. A Head of Customer Service is due to be appointed shortly.

Key Objective (iii)(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.

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
1) Achieve significant progress in the scanning of paper and microfiche Development Control files	Governance	31-Mar-17	On Target	(Q1 2016/17) - The dedicated team continues to scan Planning files with a view to supporting flexible and remote working and reducing space requirements. Approximately 20% of the 2383 Council Deeds have been scanned and up-loaded onto the Council's mapping system. Additionally a spreadsheet has been developed to organise approximately 6000 miscellaneous documents in preparation for scanning.
2) Scan Building Control paper and microfiche files to promote flexible working and reduce storage costs.	Governance	31-Mar-17	On Target	(Q1 2016/17) - The dedicated team continues to scan building control with a view to supporting flexible and remote working and reducing space requirements.
3) Undertake document scanning projects in Legal Services and Development management to support the Transformation Programme.	Governance	31-Mar-17	On Target	(Q1 2016/17) - We continue to scan legal documents and we are embarking on a program of creating electronic files for certain categories of legal work.



**Report to: Governance Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 29 September 2016**

**Portfolio:** Governance and Development Management (Councillor R. Bassett)

**Subject:** Annual Equality Information Report 2016

**Officer contact for further information:** B. Copson (01992 564042)

**Democratic Services Officer:** M. Jenkins (01992 564607)

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**Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Select Committee reviews the Equality Information Report for 2016.**

**Executive Summary:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that authorities subject to the public sector equality duty publish equality information annually to demonstrate compliance with the duty. The Council published its last equality information report in September 2015, and the 2016 report sets out the progress made since the last report, to improve the Council's services and employment practices for people with protected characteristics.

The Council's progress against the public sector equality duty is monitored bi-annually by Management Board and overview and scrutiny to ensure compliance and drive improvement in performance.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The broad purpose of the public sector equality requires that the Council integrates a consideration of equality and good relations into its day-to-day business. It must consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and fairness, and reflect equality considerations into the design of policies and the delivery of services; and keep these issues under review.

The review and monitoring of performance against the equality duty helps the authority to comply with its legal requirement; and to provide services and employment practices which meet the diverse needs of its customers and employees.

**Other Options for Action:**

No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review progress against the public sector equality duty and to consider corrective action where necessary, could mean that opportunities for improvement are lost.

**Report:**

1. The Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies, including the Council, which are subject to the public sector equality duty, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and
- (c) foster good relations between different groups.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- (a) removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- (b) taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- (c) encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The equality duty covers: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships.

2. The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public bodies. Understanding how services affect different groups makes it more likely that the services have the intended effect and this can lead to greater equality and better outcomes. Organisations which provide services which meet the needs of their customers and workforce are likely to carry out their core business more efficiently and have a more productive workforce.

3. Public bodies are also subject to a specific duty which requires that they publish information at least annually demonstrating compliance with the equality duty. The Council last published information in October 2015 covering the 12 months up until July 2015 and the Equality Information Report 2016, attached at Appendix 1, sets out the work it has undertaken in the 12 months up until July 2016, to improve equality for its customers and employees.

4. The annual Equality Report translates technical action plans for the year into an accessible outcome led report setting out how people have actually benefited from the work undertaken. The report will be published on the Council's website alongside other equality information, and will be available in other formats upon request.

5. Work to take forward the Council's equality duty is coordinated by the Corporate Equality working group and routinely monitored by Management Board and the Governance Select Committee bi-annually at quarters 2 and 4, with other specific reports as required. The Equality Information Report was reviewed by Management Board on 3 August 2016.

6. The Select Committee is requested to review the Equality Information Report for 2016.

**Consultation Undertaken:** Corporate Equality Working Group (CEWG) and within Directorates via representatives to the CEWG.

**Resource Implications:** None

**Legal and Governance Implications:** The adoption of a policy supports activities to comply with the Equality Act 2010; and the production and publishing of an annual report complies with the Equality Act 2010.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:** None

**Background Papers:** None.

**Impact Assessments:**

***Risk Management:*** The production of a policy and annual information report reduces risk associated with non-compliance with statutory duties.

***Equality and Diversity:*** The production of a policy and annual information report supports the Council's equality work and helps to ensure the delivery of good equality practices throughout the Council.

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# Equality Information Report

## 2016



**DRAFT**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

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If you would like this report in another format, for example large print or Braille, please email:

[equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

More information:

For more information about this report or any aspect of the Council's equality work see [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk) or email [equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

## Introduction

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### Forward by the Portfolio Holder responsible for Equality:

#### Councillor Richard Bassett



Across Epping Forest District Council we work hard to continually improve services and make sure everyone who lives, works or visits our district can access our services and benefit from our work. We also recognise we are a community leader and by setting high standards and promoting values of consideration and understanding, we can influence attitudes and help people to accept others more easily.

Equality remains at the centre of all we do and is key to achieving our Corporate Aims and objectives [link] We are an inclusive organisation and believe it is essential that all members of the Council and our community feel valued and able to fulfil their potential. We challenge any form of unfair discrimination or harassment and we expect all members of staff and partner organisations we work with to share this commitment.

Our work is underpinned by legislation with specific responsibilities for local government. This legislation requires that we produce an annual report of our work to progress equality. We hope you will enjoy reading our report and that it will enable you to better understand what we do, and how we are working to improve the everyday lives of people in our community.

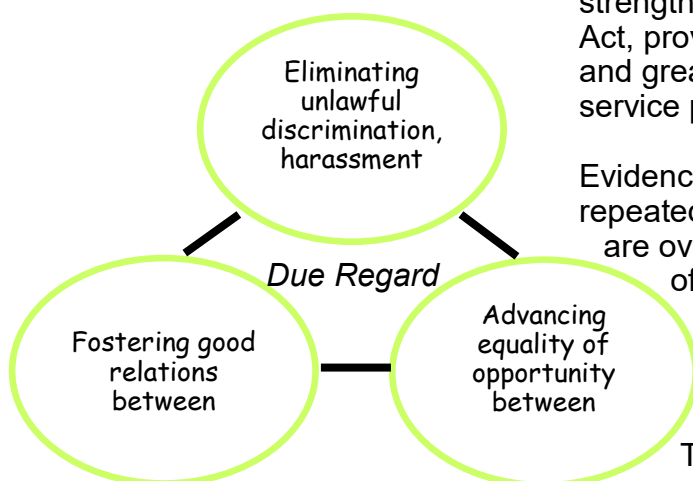
### This report

This report provides an overview of our work over the last 12 months since July 2015, and builds upon previous [reports](#) and should be read in conjunction with them. Together these reports enable others to assess how effective we are in meeting our responsibilities under equality legislation.

As an overview of our work, this report doesn't necessarily contain information about everything we do. As an organisation committed to equality, much of what we do is routine and part of our everyday experience. Many of our activities which deliver greater equality, are so integrated into our way of working that they do not stand out as being evidence of compliance with equality legislation. This is as it should be. Equality should be embedded and be just the way we do things at the Council. Therefore this report sets out just some of the changes we have made or services we have delivered over the last year.

## Equality legislation and council duties

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*...sets an expectation that public services must treat everyone with dignity and respect.*

### Public sector equality Duty:

*Also known as 'the general equality duty' and s149*

Anti-discrimination legislation was harmonised and strengthened in 2010 by the introduction of The Equality Act, providing stronger protection against discrimination, and greater clarity for employers, businesses and public service providers about their responsibilities.

Evidence shows that some groups of people are repeatedly disadvantaged in society by the way their needs are overlooked or ignored. These groups of people are offered protection under the Equality Act. The Equality Act requires us to consider their needs and requirements when carrying out our business as an employer and service provider.

These groups are known as protected groups and are: age, disability, faith or religion, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, and sexual orientation.

**The Equality Act 2010** places a number of responsibilities and requirements on the Council. We have a 'public sector equality duty' to have due regard to the need to:

- 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation**
- 2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and**
- 3. Foster good relations between different groups**

**The purpose** of the 'public sector equality duty' is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into our day-to-day business.

## What does 'due regard' mean?

'Due regard' means consciously thinking about the three public sector equality duty aims as part of the process of our normal business and decision making, removing disadvantage, and encouraging participation and success. It requires us to consider whether the aims of the public sector equality duty can be progressed by our services and activities.

## ....and 'equality of opportunity'?

**Equality of opportunity** means

- Removing or minimising disadvantages
- Taking steps to meet different needs
- Encouraging participation when it is disproportionately low

## ...and 'foster good relations'?

'Foster good relations' means promoting understanding between different groups of people.

## Protected Characteristics:

...are age, disability, faith or religion, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, and sexual orientation



## Equality Objectives

In addition to the public sector equality duty we have two additional and specific duties:

1. We have to set equality objectives at least every four years that will help us to further the aims of the public sector equality duty

(See pages 6-7 for more information about our equality objectives)

## Equality information

2. and we must publish information annually to show the progress we are making to deliver the general duty

This is our report for 2016 and is evidence that we are complying with our statutory duties.

## Equality Objectives

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**We produce objectives to provide focus where it matters**

Equality legislation requires that we set equality objectives at least every four years that will help us to further the aims of the public sector equality duty. In March 2016 the objectives we set in 2012 came to the end of their lifetime. These objectives were our first set of objectives and we were concerned to establish the capacity, tools, and ownership to deliver meaningful equality work. These objectives were:

### **2012—2016**

- 1. To develop existing customer and employee equality intelligence gathering systems and the use of intelligence in service planning**
- 2. To ensure ownership of equality by those within the Council in a position to shape services, for example Councillors and managers**
- 3. To develop engagement across all the protected equality groups**
- 4. To Ensure that the Council's culture, systems and working practices allow for the development of a management profile representative of its workforce as a whole**

The work we set ourselves to achieve these objectives was organised through an action plan [\[link\]](#) and coordinated by a working group of representatives from across the Council. Progress was reported to and monitored by the Council's elected members every 6 months and over the objectives' four year life time, 94% of the actions were achieved representing significant progress to further the aims of the public sector equality duty.

### **2016—2020**

In April 2016 we adopted a new set of equality objectives to build and expand upon the initial set, and take the Council forward until 2020. These objectives are:

- 1. To integrate the Council's public sector equality duty into our partnership working**
- 2. To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management**

3. **To develop our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver our plans**
4. **To improve and develop equality in our business activities**

An action plan has again been developed to deliver these objectives and the Corporate Equality Working Group will meet regularly to coordinate the work. The Council's elected members will monitor progress on a six monthly basis and our progress [link] will be published on the Council's website.

## **Equality through our high level strategic aims and objectives**

Equality is built into our highest level Council aims and objectives. The Council's Corporate Aims and Key Objectives include a commitment to ensure the Council understands the effects of an ageing population within the district and to work with other agencies to make appropriate plans and arrangements to respond to these effects.

### **Understanding the ageing population**

This year we undertook an Ageing Population Project to:

- better understand the ageing demographic
- review the provision and delivery of community and cultural services
- to ensure our sheltered and designated accommodation for older people is fit for purpose.

### **Essex Superfast broadband helps rural areas**

We are involved in the Essex Rural Broadband project to provide broadband to people in rural areas. Access to broadband helps people who find it difficult to get out to access services and information.

### **New affordable homes**

This year, we appointed a contractor to build up to 51 affordable rented homes and are in discussion with developers for the provision of up to 15 more.

## **Transforming our services**

We have launched a Transformation Programme to modernise our services and better equip ourselves to deliver our Corporate Aims and Key Objectives. Through this programme we are fundamentally modifying our policies, systems and structures. Therefore we are investing in infrastructure, new ways of thinking and working, and the development of new skills and abilities. We are changing the way we do business in order to respond to changes in our external environment and customer expectations.

Modern and more accessible services together with greater efficiency, will enable everyone seeking to use our services to access them more easily and have their enquiry addressed at first contact more often.



## Equality initiatives and progress

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### Through employment

#### Attracting the best employees for the future

We have recently signed up to a Local Government Association initiative called 'Plotr', which is a national careers website based on an interactive, psychometric game. It's aim is to help young people aged 11 to 24 to discover and investigate potential career paths based on their interests, skills and personality. We want to access young people and schools at key decision milestones and to create awareness of potential careers within the Council and help us to attract younger people to our workforce.

#### Looking after our staff

We have recently commissioned training on Mental Health to help managers identify if an employee may be struggling with mental health issues and how to best support those employees in the work place.

#### Strengthening personal resilience

This year we ran 'Strengthening Personal Resilience' sessions which give members of staff advice and tools on how to cope with pressure while helping to ensure our workforce is motivated, engaged, committed and maintains performance through periods of uncertainty and change whilst minimising the stressful effects of such events.

#### Providing a healthy work-place



We have also recommitted to the MINDFUL EMPLOYER® Charter for employers who are positive about mental health. A voluntary agreement supporting employers in working within the spirit of its positive approach. The Charter is one element of the MINDFUL EMPLOYER initiative aimed at increasing awareness of mental health in the workplace and supporting businesses in recruiting and retaining staff. We want to support our employees to remain in work, help reduce sickness absence and thereby improve customer service.

#### Work experience for graduates with disabilities

We are working with 'Change 100' which provides placements for graduates with a disability to provide them with a meaningful period of work experience and hopefully help them secure permanent work opportunities.

#### We welcome job applications from people with disabilities

We have placed an advert in the 'Living with Disability' magazine to bring awareness that the Council welcomes job applications from disabled candidates.



## **Through our services**

### **Help with waste collection including medical waste**

We continue to assist people who need help with their waste bins. Elderly residents or residents with disabilities can place their bins at a point more convenient to them or our operatives will collect their bins saving these residents from moving them to the boundary of their property. We also provide additional bin capacity for medical waste which needs regular disposal.

## **Large print**

We work with people with visual impairment to help them to access our services and will provide our documents in larger print or Braille when requested .

### **We help people claim the benefits they are entitled to**

Benefits officers are available to help people to make online applications for Universal Credit. We also offer personal budgeting support to recipients of Universal Credit to help them manage their finances.

### **Rent surgeries for older tenants**

Older people can often benefit from help to interpret the rent increase letters. We arrange rent surgeries at all sheltered schemes when the rent increase letters are issued to help residents understand the rent increase letters in conjunction with housing benefit letters in the comfort of their own homes and with easy access to relevant documentation.

### **We work with other agencies to help vulnerable tenants**

We refer vulnerable tenants or other tenants in need of additional housing support to other agencies who can help them.

Family Mosaic provide advice and support regarding:

- independent housing support
- money and budgeting
- life skills
- enjoying and achieving
- health and wellbeing, and
- community and social networks

The Citizens Advice Bureau provide advice and support regarding:

- independent housing support
- tenancy management
- budgeting and rent accounting issues, and
- social networks.

Making these referrals and helping vulnerable or other tenants in need of additional housing support to access these services, helps them to maintain their tenancies.

### **Flexible direct debit payments**

Our council housing tenants are now able to pay their rent by direct debit on any day of the month which helps people manage their finances.

## Equality for our tenants and leaseholders

We provide a housing service for around 6,500 council homes. We make sure we understand demand for our council homes by monitoring applications for services, undertaking satisfaction surveys and occasionally whole-sector surveys.

## Understanding our tenants

This year our Tenant Satisfaction Survey produced 798 responses. Of these:

- 43% were aged 60 years or over
- 65% were female
- 77% had a household member whose day to day activities are limited due to health problems
- the majority (83%) were White British
- 6% were spread across a range of ethnic origins.

## Providing a home for refugees

When a request was received from the Government to assist with providing accommodation for Syrian refugees we responded positively. We agreed to make available 1 x 2 bedroom flat and 1 x 1 bedroom flat from our housing stock to house up to 6 Syrian Refugees in each year for a period of four years. This represents in total up to 8 properties housing up to 24 Syrian Refugees. Those housed will be non-secure tenants for up to a period of 5 years. Helping to relocate some vulnerable Syrian people addresses discrimination and advances equality of opportunity for a settled life for this disadvantaged racial group.

## We listened to customers and made Careline easier to access



Our Careline Customer Satisfaction Survey this year told us that customers like being able to apply for emergency alarms or other telecare equipment linked to Epping Forest Careline online and pay by direct debit. Increasing the range of ways people can apply and pay for Careline services helps people with mobility difficulties, or people fleeing domestic violence for example, to access the service from their own home.

## Kitchen improvements

Our sheltered housing schemes have a communal kitchen to enable residents to prepare their meals together and safely. This year we've upgraded these kitchens so that they are more accessible for residents with disabilities. Making sure people with restricted movement can access the kitchen gives them the same opportunity to use the kitchen facility as others.

## **Helping people in the private sector with their housing**

### **Supporting private mobile homes sites**

Many older people live in park homes and the implementation of new site condition licences for Park Homes sites has resulted in improvements to health and safety and for conditions which are fair and non-discriminatory. Additionally our consultation with Gypsy, Roma and Travellers authorised site owners and residents and the settled community resulted in new standard site licence conditions being introduced for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers authorised privately owned sites. We continue to work with site owners and residents to ensure site condition licences are complied with.

### **Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme...**

We continue to work in partnership with East 15 Acting School (University of Essex) to encourage good practice among landlords of student housing, Together we operate a Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme to provide good quality private rented accommodation for students who are often young and living on limited incomes.

### **...we prosecute for illegal evictions**

Security of tenure is important and we deal with illegal evictions when necessary. In June 2016 we successfully prosecuted a local landlady for illegally evicting a tenant who refused to pay further costs for utilities in addition to the costs included in her 6 month tenancy agreement. The tenant, a Taiwanese student, was awarded £100 compensation by magistrates for her distress reflecting her highly intimidating and frightening experience without family to help or additional money for alternative accommodation.

### **Improving living conditions for agricultural nursery workers**

A task group has been set up to improve the living conditions for many agricultural workers who live in temporary and makeshift permanent structures on the sites in which they work. Many of these workers are migrant workers and English is their second language. Looking at fire and gas safety, heating provision, and water supply and drainage facilities, the task group aims to improve living conditions and ensure health and safety requirements are met.

Part of this work is a consultation with site operators seeking their views on proposed standard conditions for the stationing of caravans used to accommodate workers on nursery sites.

## **Helping people at risk of abuse**

### **The J9 Network of 300 practitioners**

We continue to organise free domestic abuse awareness training for staff, agencies and voluntary groups working in the district. 'J9' is a Domestic Violence Initiative and its aim is to raise awareness of domestic abuse and to enable all staff to understand their role and responsibility in relation to domestic abuse. The courses explore the dynamics of domestic abuse and also the impact domestic abuse has on those involved and how this can differ according to gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith, disability, or age. J9 courses are now also run in the neighbouring district of Uttlesford and a J9 Network with over 300 practitioners across Essex has been developed.

### **A plan of action for victims of domestic abuse**

Our work with the police, fire service and the voluntary sector to plan the safety and security of people at medium and high risk of domestic abuse continues. Additional security measures are provided or a 'safe' room created in the home to provide a sanctuary for people at risk.

### **We are trained to respond**

Regular training and refresher training on safeguarding has enabled us to help identify vulnerable adults and children in a number of cases and to liaise with partner agencies to ensure people receive the support they need.

### **...and to safeguard children and vulnerable adults**

In 2015 our safeguarding team received 142 safeguarding reports concerning 109 children and 90 adults. Of these, 66 cases were referred to social care, 3 to the Police, and 22 were referred to other partner agencies. If concerns do not meet the thresholds for statutory referrals to social care, then the safeguarding team attempt to signpost vulnerable people and families to organisations who can provide early help and intervention, for example, Family Mosaic or the Citizen Advice Bureau.

The response to complex safeguarding cases is managed via a Multi-Agency Case Conference meeting with our partners including Social Care, the Police and Fire Services, voluntary agencies and statutory mental health teams. A plan is agreed to protect and support the vulnerable people in these cases.

### **...and to prevent the exploitation of vulnerable people**

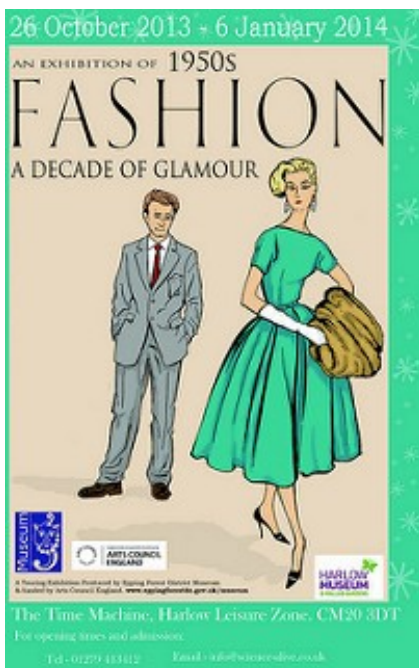
We also continue to work with the police, the voluntary sector and landlords to provide crime prevention advice and assistance for vulnerable people. Bespoke risk management plans are developed for people who are vulnerable perhaps through age, disability, race or their sexual orientation, or those who might be exploited by other people moving in and taking over their homes, often for criminal purposes ('cuckooing').

## Our bigger and more accessible museum opened this year

In March 2016 together with the London Borough of Broxbourne we re-opened The Epping Forest District Museum in Waltham Abbey after its complete renovation and extension. Now fully accessible with lift access to all 3 floors, and new accessible toilet facilities, visitors can use all floors of the building to access activity rooms, view displays and access learning sessions. Not forgetting museum staff and volunteers, the office areas are also fully accessible as part of this £2million scheme.

## Accessible events and Inclusive exhibitions

Between the Epping Forest Museum and the Lowewood Museum in Hoddesdon, there are new displays and both permanent and touring exhibitions showing all aspects of life in the district including the district's lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans history.



## A Decade of Glamour 1950's exhibition poster

Staff from our Museum, Heritage and Culture team provide an extensive range of activities for visitors to learn about their history and to develop their subject knowledge and learn the skills of historical investigation. Activities are offered for all ages from toddlers to older people, and at different times - including a 'Museums at Night' event - to be as inclusive as possible; whilst people with disabilities are encouraged to take part.

Staff also deliver a programme of talks of benefit to older people including residents of care homes, the U3A (University of the third age), and social groups and thereby help to prevent social isolation.

## 'Boxes' to help learning and memory

Topic boxes, containing a range of original and replica artefacts, can be hired for half a term at a time to support work on a topic in school.

In May 2015 a popular scheme to provide reminiscence boxes was launched across the district and the London Borough of Broxbourne. Reminiscence boxes are often used by care homes for people with dementia however, reminiscence therapy can also be used by retired social groups, visual impaired groups, people with learning difficulties, or those with speech and language difficulty to help stimulate conversation and memory.

## Helping people with dementia

The Council is supporting the 'Transitions' programme provided by Essex County Council. A resource pack about the programme is downloadable from our website and provides information about activities which positively impact on the care of those living with dementia in care settings. Additionally officers from Museum Heritage and Culture gave a presentation on this work at a Reminiscence Network East Conference in Norwich in March.



## Helping people manage their homes

Low cost repairs and home security for older residents....



...and gardening services

Adapting the homes of disabled people

Understanding our customers

We collect equality monitoring data from our customers

Research and consultation to help us

Learning about the impact of an Ageing population

Our 'Handyperson Service' continues to be very popular with an increase in demand of 15% this year. Low cost repairs and home security provided by vetted contractors allows our older residents to trust the contractors entering their homes.

Many of our older residents benefitted this year from gardening services provided by a vetted gardener through our C.A.R.E service. We have also added a vetted private gardening contractor to our 'Preferred contractors' list.

The demand for 'Disabled Facilities Grants' continues to grow with referrals increasing this year by 53%. The changes we make to the homes of disabled home owners and private tenants allow them to access their bathrooms, use their kitchens, and get up and down stairs. These grants are means-tested and applicants are referred by Essex County Council Occupational Therapists. We supplement government funding to help meet demand.

We analyse our services and activities at least every three years, to make sure we understand how they impact on people. We use this understanding to focus on need and to make sure all our services are accessible. Analysis completed this year is published on our [website](#).

Our services collect equality monitoring data from customers when they need this data to help them provide the right services in the right ways. The data helps us learn which groups of people aren't making the most of our services, and helps us to provide services fairly. This year we carried out equality monitoring on visitors to a proposed development consultation, and on applicants for jobs with us.

Every year we undertake a wide range of [consultations](#) and surveys to generate views and information to help us to provide the right services in the way people want.

This year we carried out a series of informal consultation focus groups with people aged 65-90+ to ascertain what they believe will be their service needs and aspirations when they reach their very old age.

## **Sporting, social and leisure activities for older people**

Sporting, social and leisure opportunities for the over 60s are provided by the Council, Everyone Active, private clubs and other organisations. A 'New Horizons' brochure is produced in April every year and includes everything from athletics, netball, swimming and tea dances at locations across the district.

***“The Jubilee Court group in Waltham abbey really enjoyed their afternoon of Boccia”.***

Boccia is a seated inclusive support which engages participants in low level physical activity through a variety of challenges and games. Working with Voluntary Action Epping Forest, resident associations, and Age UK, the Council delivers regular sessions across the district.

## **Traffic free cycling**

Cycling for Health aims to get older people fit and active through social cycling sessions that are traffic - free. Increasingly popular, on average 26 aged 60+ people participate in each session.

## **‘Winter Warmers’**

Talks from health professionals, community safety officers, health checks, seated exercise, information and a free lunch was provided to 150 older people in Buckhurst Hill, Epping and Waltham Abbey during November and December. We provided these sessions in partnership with the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group to help older people access the support and information they need to keep healthy through the winter.

***“It was a wake-up call making people aware of scams”***

Over 100 older people attended Senior Safety day in Waltham Abbey in March. The event aimed to provide residents with the tools and knowledge they need to keep safe in and around the home and encouraged those coming along to share what they have learned with their families, friends and neighbours.

## **Combatting isolation and loneliness for older people**

Loneliness and isolation can be a problem for many older people. We have developed activity groups to provide a social programme to combat feelings of isolation or loneliness, and improve general health and wellbeing. Regular sessions are facilitated in accessible locations across the District. In addition to providing a friendly, welcoming activity for older people, the groups provide an opportunity for signposting to wider support services and other appropriate agencies.

## **Improving community cohesion in areas of deprivation**

Our district has some recognised areas of deprivation including Limes Farm Estate in Chigwell, Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey, Oakwood Hill Estate in Debden and Shelley Estate in Ongar. We work with residents from these communities, with a particular focus on the “hard to reach” groups, in order to encourage participation in a range of activities to help create a sense of community cohesion and wellbeing.

## Empowering young people

### EFDC Youth Council

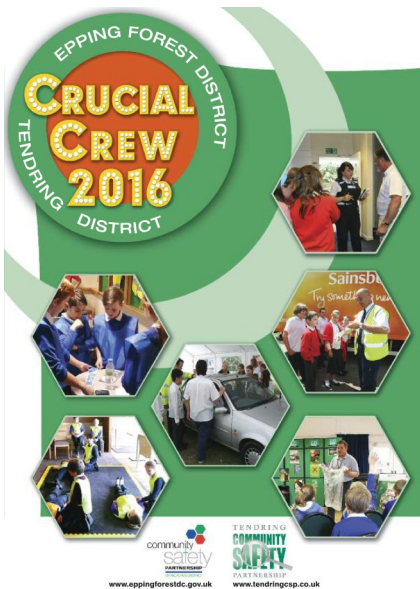
Our Youth Council is a group of 21 democratically elected teenagers between the ages of 13 and 19 years of age. In October 2015 the Youth Council held a Youth Conference attended by 90 pupils from years 7-11 from 8 secondary schools in the district on relevant issues and provided an opportunity for young people to voice their opinions on the European Union.

Regular intergenerational project work is undertaken in order to bridge the gap between generations, with local young people arranging social events for older residents for the benefit of both age ranges.

## Considered choices and understanding the consequences

We worked with other specialist agencies to raise awareness of personal safety, emotional wellbeing and crime prevention with every year 6 and year 9 pupil in the district again this year.

'Crucial Crew' and 'Reality Roadshow' are projects provided in schools every June delivering stimulating and interactive scenarios in order to empower young people to make considered choices and understand the consequences of their actions.



We provide support to the district's young artists by our Creativity Awards. Open to all our young people, the awards support the very best in artistic and creative talent.

## Encouraging creativity in our young people

This year 400 young people from a range of backgrounds and with varying abilities took the opportunity to perform and progress their dancing talent in dance showcases. This year we have continued to run 'The Epping Forest Inclusion Project' to provide a wide range of sports and leisure opportunities for children and young people with disabilities of special educational needs.

## Including disabled children and young people in sport

**“Until I found out about what was on offer through the disability inclusion project, I didn't know how to access sports and activities where he could be himself, not have to worry about people staring if he behaved differently”.**

During the school term the project puts on a number of sessions ranging from trampolining to horse riding. During the schools holidays various sessions and activities are held, which where possible include siblings and parents. To date 576 disabled children and young people have accessed the service.

Benefits include increased social interaction with peers and positive behaviour, listening and following instructions, as well as physical improvements including greater stamina, strength and flexibility.



**Redressing the disadvantages our Armed Forces community face**

The Council is a signatory to the Essex Community Covenant which is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It recognises that the wider community has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces, whether currently on active duty or veterans, and their families and aims to redress the disadvantages that the Armed Forces' community faces in comparison with other citizens.

We give increased priority to Armed Forces personnel through our Housing Allocations Scheme, Local Council Tax and Housing Benefits Schemes and support many events for serving and former personnel, especially on and around North Weald Airfield and the Airfield Museum.

**The 'Veterans Portal'**

The Council is also involved in the 'Veterans' Portal' initiative and has contributed a grant towards it. The aim of the portal is to allow service veterans to register and thereby gain access to services and support available under the Community and Corporate Covenants.

**We provide grant aid for voluntary and community groups**

We have reviewed our Grant Aid Scheme for Voluntary and Community Organisations and have new priorities which include projects which meet the needs of both older and younger people.



**Flying the rainbow flag**

In February for the third year running, we raised the rainbow flag outside the Council offices for a day in recognition of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans (LGBT) history month. A short statement was read to assembled staff to promote understanding and acceptance within our community.

**Keeping our staff up to date**

We produce an equality newsletter regularly for our staff to ensure they have the latest information and guidance to deliver equality through the services they provide. Our last newsletter, published in June, promoted our new equality objectives (see page 6) and advised staff on the work we support good mental health amongst staff (see page 8).

## Going Forward

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We will publish more equality information in September 2017 for the next 12 months.