

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Tuesday, 18 April 2017
Place:	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	7.30 - 8.08 pm
Members Present:	Councillors M Sartin (Chairman) N Avey, R Baldwin, N Bedford, R Brookes, D Dorrell, L Hughes, Y Knight, A Mitchell, S Murray, S Neville, A Patel, B Rolfe, G Shiell, D Stallan, B Surtees and D Wixley		
Other Councillors:	Councillors R Bassett, W Breare-Hall, A Grigg, J Lea, A Lion, J Philip, S Stavrou and G Waller		
Apologies:	Councillors L Girling and S Kane		
Officers Present:	D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager), A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer), S Kits (Social Media and Customer Services Officer) and J Leither (Democratic Services Officer)		

58. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

59. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor L Hughes was substituting for Councillor S Kane and that Councillor R Baldwin was substituting for Councillor L Girling.

60. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 28 February 2017 be signed by the chairman as a correct record, subject to:

- the spelling under item 48 being changed from “four tired” to “four tiered”;
- and
- the spelling under item 55 being changed from “question make” to “question mark”.

It was also stated that Councillor Girling was not at this meeting, but upon reviewing this, the Senior Democratic Services Officer found that he had been in attendance and the minutes were correct on this point.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Surtees declared a non-pecuniary, non-prejudicial interest in item 10, ‘Scrutiny of external organisations Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust’, in that he was part of the chaplaincy team at that Hospital.

62. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee had received a question from a member of the public, Mr C Sassons, concerning the recent hand over of the contract for the management of the District's Leisure Centres.

By way of context and background Mr Sassons noted that as part of the awarding of the contract to People for Places to manage Epping Sports Centre, the District Council agreed to the removal of half the squash courts, with no plans to replace them. The Epping Squash Club Committee or its members were not notified of this change until March of this year, after the contract had been awarded. This would, in his opinion, have a fatal impact on hosting the Essex County league matches as well as hosting junior squash coaching.

His question was:

"Why was no consultation carried out with Sports Centre users on the removal of half the squash courts for the district and no plan to replace these lost courts; and what effect this new contract would have on existing users of squash courts."

The Chairman gave the following response:

"Thank you for your question Mr. Sassons.

The award of the contract for the management of the Council's leisure facilities from April 2017 was agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 1 December 2016. This decision was not subsequently called-in for review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution. The decision of the Cabinet to award the contract to Places for People Leisure Management Ltd has therefore been implemented.

I will request the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor H. Kane, to provide you with a full and complete response to each of the issues that you have raised in regard to the future provision of squash court facilities at Epping Sports Centre, as the Portfolio Holder is directly responsible for the management of the Council's leisure facilities and best placed to reply to your concerns."

As a supplementary question, Mr Sassons said that by way of background the Epping Forest District Council Leisure management contract produced in August 2015 contained a business case and procurement strategy. At Appendix 1 there was a service delivery statement that said that the council should maintain the current minimum with continuous improvements. Also, to deliver on the Council's key objective on sports and physical activity, to increase participation in sports and physical activity and to improve the current levels of participation. Given this, how did the loss of the courts relate to this business case that looked to increase participation and did not mention sports being lost?

Mr Macnab dealt with this in the absence of the Leisure Portfolio Holder, who was on holiday. He noted that he had spoken to the Portfolio Holder about this and he would take this supplementary question on board and add it to the comprehensive reply that would be provided to Mr Sassons from the Portfolio Holder.

63. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN

There were no call-in of decisions to be considered.

64. CO-OPTION OF YOUTH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Communities Select Committee, Councillor Knight introduced the report from her Select Committee recommending that a representative from the Epping Forest Youth Council be appointed as a non-voting co-optee to the Communities Select Committee and that the representative be either one person or a rotating representative.

This proposal had been discussed with officers and it was agreed that we were impressed with the youth councillors' intelligence and enthusiasm and it would be good to have their input at the select committee meetings. The Communities Select Committee covered a wide range of subjects including safer communities and the police. There may however, be some meetings that would consider items in private session and this may not be suitable for youth councillors.

Councillor Knight suggested that this be trialled for a year to see how it went. She added that the youth councillors today would need to understand the topics that we discussed to get a complete picture of local government. She would like more members of the youth council to become future members of this council. This could only benefit us in the long term and would reduce the average age of the councillors.

Councillor Surtees was in support of this but was concerned at not having continuity of youth councillors attending the meetings; that is, having a different Youth Councillor at each meeting.

Councillor Sartin noted that they could attend any select committee as they were public meetings, but by making this more formal they would feel more welcome.

Councillor Neville agreed with the recommendations and that it should be recommended to the full council.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to the Council that:

- (1) A representative of the Epping Forest Youth Council be appointed as a non-voting co-optee to the Communities Select Committee from the 2017/18 Municipal Year; and
- (2) That the representative be either one person or rotating representatives, as agreed by the Youth Council.

65. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - REVIEW

The Committee considered the Cabinet's key decision list for March 2017. They noted that it was still a legal requirement for local authorities to publish a notice in respect of key decisions that it proposed to make at least 28 days before that decision was made. The Committee were invited to identify any particular issues which were of concern.

Planning Policy Portfolio

Councillor Philip the Portfolio holder said that he had no further updates on the Local Plan consultation following the March Cabinet meeting. A workshop will be held in the coming week updating members then.

Environment Portfolio

Councillor Breare-Hall, the Portfolio holder, noted that a new draft had been agreed with officers and relevant members for the recent call-in and that this would go forward as a portfolio holder's decision.

Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio

Councillor Waller, the Portfolio holder, updated the meeting saying that we were two weeks into the off street parking contract. It was working well, but we were still in the initial stages. We were now enforcing parking on the weekends, which surprised some parkers and we were more efficient now than in the past.

Assets and Economic Development Portfolio

Councillor Grigg, the Portfolio holder said that the shopping park continued to make progress and they were hoping for it to open in the beginning of September 2017.

66. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL NHS TRUST

The Committee noted the report on the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) NHS Trust who would attend the June 2017 meeting to respond to the concerns of members in respect of aspects of local inpatient, outpatient and other medical and emergency services. The report set out the themes and issues raised by members that they wished to be addressed by the PAH representatives.

Councillor Patel asked if an additional question could be asked regarding what additional things they had done in regard to mental health issues.

Councillor Knight agreed this was a key point. What about the safety of vulnerable patients in mental health units. She had known patients who had been allowed to leave establishments resulting in a Police search. Also, did they have any new technology/treatments on mental health service that they could share with us?

Councillor Surtees would like to know about any liaisons arrangements with children organisations in connection to mental health.

Councillor Patel noted that the report provided by Councillor Gadsby at the last O&S meeting on the County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee indicated a 20% vacancy at PAH. How would they action their plans while still using a large percentage of agency staff.

Councillor Sartin asked the Committee if a formal presentation from the officers from PAH was needed. The Committee agreed that they would not want a formal presentation.

Councillor Patel asked to see a copy of their action plan. Mr Tautz said that he would ask them for one.

RESOLVED:

(1) That in addition to the items already identified to be put to the officers from the Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, the following additional points be put to them:

- a) What were the Trust's plans for the increase and enhancement of its existing mental-health service provision;
- b) What were the Trust's arrangements for the safety of vulnerable patients within its Mental Health Unit at Princess Alexandra Hospital and the introduction of new mental-health service treatments;
- c) What were the Trust's liaison arrangements with other organisations in terms of child and adolescent mental-health issues; and
- d) The Trust's current use of agency staff and how it intends to implement its improvement plans without reliance on the current high-level of agency staff.

(2) That no formal presentation should be asked for from the officers from Princess Alexandra Hospital and that they answer the questions sent to them in advance and answer any supplementary ones on the night.

67. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. They noted that a copy of each Select Committee sections and the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee report had been sent to the relevant Chairmen and Lead Officers for comment. The draft was still incomplete as not all Committees had held their final meeting by the time the agenda went to print. If there were any more comments, they should be submitted to Democratic Services by Wednesday, 10 May 2017.

A final version of the report would be submitted to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 6 June 2017 for endorsement and then on to the nearest full Council meeting.

Councillor Bedford queried if the presentation given by Thames Water to the Neighbourhoods Select Committee was in the draft. Subsequently, the Senior Democratic Services Officer checked the draft and confirmed that it had been included.

Councillor Bassett pointed out a 'typo' on page 74 of the agenda, under the Governance Select Committee, having too many 'not's in the text. This would be investigated and put right.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the comments received the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2016/17 be noted.

68. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES 2016/17 - REVIEW**(a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee considered their work programme and noted the progress to date.

Item 3 – Essex County Council Local Highways Services – it was noted that this item was still outstanding and would be looked at again in the new year.

Select CommitteesResources Select Committee

Councillor Patel, Vice Chairman of the Resources Select Committee reported that they had a special one item meeting on 10 April 2017 to consider the PICK form on the scrutiny of the Transformation Programme. The original suggestion by this Committee was to establish a sub-group to look into this but after due consideration the Resources Select Committee considered that a better way to go was to establish a Task and Finish Panel and proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve the setting up of this Panel. They would like the T&F Panel to:

Fully evaluate and establish:

- a) A clear statement as to the objectives of the programme;
- b) A clear understanding as to the scope of the programme;
- c) A clear understanding as to the budget and financial implications of the programme;
- d) To document proposals for the ongoing scrutiny required to ensure that the programme continues to be:
 - 1) Meeting the programme objectives;
 - 2) Focused on the identified scope;
 - 3) On schedule; and
 - 4) Within budget

The Panel should also look at the high risk projects that required Council wide co-ordination and were overseen by the Transformation Programme Board; and should also be mindful of having a clear end date to complete their work on.

Councillor Sartin agreed that it looked like the best way forward was to set up a Task and Finish Panel to specifically define the objectives, scope and budget of the Transformation Programme and map out a way forward for the Resources Select Committee to scrutinise the Transformation Programme over the coming years. The Committee agreed to this.

It was also agreed that all members would be approached and asked if they wished to be a member on this Panel.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a Task and Finish Panel be established to specifically define the objectives, scope and budget of the Transformation Programme; and

(2) That all members be asked if they wished to sit on the proposed Task and Finish Panel.

(b) Reserve Programme

The Committee's reserve programme was noted and agreed.

CHAIRMAN