



NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL** to be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING** at 7.30 pm on **Thursday, 27 July 2017** for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glen Chipp'.

Glen Chipp
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services
Officer:**

Council Secretary: Simon Hill
Tel: 01992 564249 Email:
democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

WEBCASTING/FILMING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. The meeting may also be otherwise filmed by third parties with the Chairman's permission.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Therefore by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area or otherwise indicate to the Chairman before the start of the meeting.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Public Relations Manager on 01992 564039.

BUSINESS

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking. The Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management will read the following announcement:

“The chairman would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery.”

2. FORMER COUNCILLORS I. ABBEY, S. GOODWIN AND K. WRIGHT

The Council is invited to stand for a minute’s silence in tribute to the memory of former Councillors who have recently passed away.

Ian Abbey passed away on 23 May 2017. Former Councillor Abbey was the Chairman of the Council for the 1986/87 municipal year and represented the North Weald Bassett Ward of the District as a Conservative Councillor from 1978 to 1991. He served on many of the Council’s member bodies during this time, including the Audit Panel, the Development Committee, the Direct Services Board, the Emergency Sub-Committee, the Finance Sub-Committee, the Finance and General Purpose Sub-Committee, the Housing Services Committee (Vice-Chairman), the Leisure Services Committee, the Libraries and Museum Sub-Committee (Chairman), the Organisation Review Sub-Committee, the North Weald Airfield Sub-Committee (Vice-Chairman), the Personnel Sub-Committee, the Policy and Co-ordinating Committee, the Policy and Resources Committee and the Rates Consultative Panel.

Stan Goodwin passed away on 26 June 2017. Former Councillor Goodwin was the Chairman of the Council for the 1999/2000 municipal year and represented the Loughton Roding Ward of the District as a Labour Councillor from 1992 to 2004 which included two years as Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder. He served on many of the Council’s member bodies during this time including the Leisure Services Committee (Vice Chairman), the Loughton Leisure Centre Cabinet Committee (Chairman), the Modernising Local Government Working Group, the North Weald Airfield Working Group, the Parishes Working Group, Plans Sub-Committee ‘B’, the Policy and Co-ordinating Committee, the Public Services Monitoring Panel, the Resources Committee and the Transport Working Group. Stan Goodwin was also a County Councillor for the Loughton St. Mary’s Division of the District from 1993 to 1997.

Keith Wright passed away on 13 June 2017. Former Councillor Wright represented the Chipping Ongar (latterly Chipping Ongar, Greensted and Marden Ash) Ward of the District as a Liberal Democrat Councillor from 1991 to 2007. He served on many of the Council’s member bodies during this time including the Benefits Panel, the Complaints Panel, the Development Committee, the Housing Appeals Panel, the Joint Works Committee, the Joint Staff Committee, the Leisure Services Committee, the Licensing Panel, the Overview and Scrutiny, Committee (Community), Plans Sub-Committee ‘A’,

Area Plans Sub-Committee 'C' (Vice-Chairman), the Public Services Sub-Committee, the Policy and Co-ordinating Committee, the Resources Sub-Committee, the Staff Appeals Panel, the Transport Working Group and the Transportation Committee.

3. MINUTES (Pages 9 - 34)

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2017 (attached).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (a) Apologies for Absence
- (b) Chairman's Announcements

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within Part 4 of the Council Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Leader of the Council;
- (b) to any Portfolio Holder; or
- (c) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within the Council Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;
- (c) to any Member of the Cabinet; or
- (d) the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee.

The Council Rules provide that answers to questions under notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer

circulated later to the questioner.

Answers to questions falling within (a) and (b) above will be made available to the member asking the question one hour before the meeting. Answers to questions falling within (c) above will be circulated to all councillors.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

8. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 35 - 74)

To receive reports and any announcements from the Leader and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility:

- (a) Report of the Leader;
- (b) Report of the Assets and Economic Development Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (c) Report of the Environment Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (d) Report of the Finance Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (e) Report of the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (f) Report of the Housing Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (g) Report of the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (i) Report of the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder (attached); and
- (j) Report of the Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder (attached).

9. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

The Council Rules provide for questions by any member of the Council to the Leader or any Portfolio Holder, without notice on:

- (i) reports under the previous item; or
- (ii) any other matter of a non operational character in relation to the powers and duties of the Council or which affects all or part of the District or some or all of its inhabitants.

Council Rules provide that answers to questions without notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer from the Leader or, at the request of the Leader, from another member of the Cabinet;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner; or
- (d) where the question relates to an operational matter, the Leader or a member of the Cabinet will request that a response be given direct to the questioner by the

relevant Chief Officer.

In accordance with the Council Rules, a time limit of thirty minutes is set for questions. Any question not dealt with within the time available will receive a written reply. The Chairman may extend this period by up to a further 10 minutes at their discretion.

10. MOTIONS

(a) Area Plans Sub-Committee South – Membership 2017/18

Proposed by: Councillor S. Murray

Seconder: Councillor R. Brookes

“(1) That the following arrangements for the appointment of members to Area Plans Sub-Committee South set out in Article 10 (District Development Management Committee and Area Plans Sub-Committees) of the Council’s Constitution be waived for the current municipal year, as a result of the decision of both members representing the Loughton Roding ward of the district at the recent Annual Council meeting, not to serve on the Sub-Committee for the year:

‘(3) Area Plans Sub-Committee (South) shall comprise a maximum of 25 Councillors, being the total number representing wards in the area for which the Sub Committee is responsible. At the Annual Council meeting, the Council shall determine the membership of that Sub-Committee on the basis of the number of Councillors who sign a written notice stating that they wish to serve on the Sub-Committee for the ensuing year. Any Councillor who does not sign a notice shall be deemed not to be a member of the Sub-Committee for the year in question. Councillors may not retract a signed notice or seek to join the Sub-Committee by signing a notice until the next Annual Council meeting’;

(2) That, subject to (1) above, Councillor S. Murray be appointed to membership of Area Plans Sub-Committee South for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year”.

Background paper received on 14 June 2017.

To consider any other motion, notice of which has been given under Council Rules.

Reports of the Cabinet

11. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – HIGHLIGHT REPORT (MARCH 2017) & ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

(Leader of Council) To consider the attached report.

12. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17 (Pages 75 - 128)

(a) To receive the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council (attached);

(b) To note the progress report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (attached); and

(c) To answer any questions without notice asked in accordance with Council Rules.

13. AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17 (Pages 129 - 136)

(Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee) To note the attached annual report of the Audit and Governance Committee for 2016/17.

14. ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY (Pages 137 - 168)

(Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee) To consider the attached report.

15. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (Pages 169 - 170)

(Leader of Council) To consider the attached report.

16. CHAIRMANSHIP & VICE-CHAIRMANSHIP OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES & PANELS 2017/18 (Pages 171 - 172)

(Leader of Council) To consider the attached report.

17. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (Pages 173 - 174)

(a) To receive the attached report from Councillor H. Kane, as the Council representative on Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills Ltd;

(b) To receive from Council representatives the reports any other reports on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations and to receive answers to any questions on those bodies which may be put without notice; and

(c) To request written reports from representatives on joint arrangements and external organisations for future meetings.

18. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion: To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
Nil	Nil	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Background Papers: Article 17 of the Constitution (Access to Information) define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

(a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the

report is based; and

(b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES

Committee: Council

Date: 25 May 2017

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 - 8.35 pm

Members Present: Councillors J Lea (Chairman), D Stallan (Vice-Chairman), N Avey, R Baldwin, R Bassett, A Beales, N Bedford, W Breare-Hall, R Brookes, G Chambers, K Chana, D Dorrell, A Grigg, S Heap, L Hughes, R Jennings, J Jennings, H Kane, S Kane, P Keska, J Knapman, M McEwen, G Mohindra, R Morgan, S Murray, S Neville, A Patel, J Philip, C P Pond, C C Pond, B Rolfe, B Sandler, M Sartin, G Shiell, D Sunger, B Surtees, E Webster, C Whitbread, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley

Apologies: Councillors A Boyce, H Brady, R Butler, R Gadsby, L Girling, S Jones, H Kauffman, Y Knight, A Lion, L Mead, C Roberts, D Roberts, S Stavrou and G Waller

Officers Present: G Chipp (Chief Executive), C O'Boyle (Director of Governance), R Palmer (Director of Resources), A Hall (Director of Communities), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer), P Seager (Chairman's Secretary), S Kits (Social Media and Customer Services Officer), A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer (Trainee))

1. **WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management 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.

2. **MANCHESTER TERRORIST ATTACK**

The Chairman of the Council asked Members to stand for a minutes silence to pay respect to the innocent victims of the terrorist attack in Manchester on Monday 22 May 2017.

3. **RETIRING CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL - YEAR OF OFFICE**

Councillor J Lea addressed the Council on her year of office. She thanked Members who attended functions with her and especially Councillors G Shiell and R Morgan. She had raised nearly £13,000 for her chosen charity, Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.

Councillors C Whitbread, C C Pond and the Chief Executive, G Chipp, expressed their appreciation for her hard work and dedication she had shown during her term of office.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The nomination of Councillor D Stallan for the Office of Chairman of the Council having been moved formally by Councillor A Grigg and seconded by Councillor C Whitbread it was;

RESOLVED:

That Councillor D Stallan be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuring year.

Councillor D Stallan thereupon made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office of the Chairman of the Council and thanked the Council for the honour.

Councillor D Stallan announced that he had chosen four charities for his term of office, which would be Diabetics UK, Royal Force Air Cadets (Epping and North Weald Branch), Norway House and Safer Places Epping Forest.

Councillor D Stallan in the Chair

5. PAST CHAIRMAN'S BADGE

The new Chairman presented Councillor J Lea with a past Chairman's badge of office.

6. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The nomination of Councillor R Bassett for the Vice-Chairman of the Council having been moved formally by Councillor M Sartin and seconded by Councillor J Knapman was;

RESOLVED:

That Councillor R Bassett be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuring year.

Councillor R Bassett thereupon made a declaration of acceptance of Office of Vice-Chairman of the Council and thanked the Council for his appointment.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meeting on 17 February 2017 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments;

Planning Application EPF/2473/16 – Woodview, Lambourne Road, Chigwell (Minute 118.)The planning reference number being corrected to EPF/2473/16 under items 109 (Declarations of Interest) and 118 (Planning Application Woodview, Lambourne Road, Chigwell). This reference being the correct application number for this development;

Former Councillor Michael Tomkins (Minute 110.) to add to his service as a County Councillor for the Chigwell Ward from 1997-2005; and

Joint Arrangements and External Organisations (Minutes 122.) That a typographical error be corrected to 'representatives'.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by members of the Council under this item.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS**(a) Announcements by the Chairman of Council****(i) Floral Display**

The Chairman announced that he intended to send the flowers from tonight's meeting to Cunningham House Care Home, North Weald.

10. REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENTS PANEL**Mover: Councillor C Whitbread, (Chairman of the Panel and Leader of the Council)**

Councillor C Whitbread reported on the appointments which he had made to the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Outside Organisations carrying out executive Functions.

Councillor C Whitbread also reported the recommendations of the Appointment Panel in relation to the membership, chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels (non-executive bodies) and to Outside Organisations carrying out Council, regulatory or non Cabinet Functions. Councillor C Whitbread also advised of the changes made to the nominations since the Panel had met.

The Council voted on appointments where the number of nominations exceeded the number of places available.

RESOLVED:

(1) That, in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the constitution of political groups as set out in Appendix 1, to these minutes be noted;

(2) That details of appointments made by the Leader of the Council to the Cabinet and Cabinet Sub-Committees carrying out Executive functions as set out on Appendix 2, to these minutes be noted;

(3) That the Membership, Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship of Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels (non-Executive bodies) as set out at Appendix 3 to these minutes be approved;

(4) That the group representatives for the purposes of notifying substitute members for meetings be approved as follows:

(a) Conservative Group:

Councillor C. Whitbread (Leader);
Councillor S. Stavrou (Deputy Leader);
Councillor S. Kane; and
Councillor G. Waller;

(b) Green Party Group:

Councillor S. Neville (Leader); and
Councillor S. Heap (Deputy Leader);

(c) Liberal Democrat Group:

Councillor J. M. Whitehouse (Leader); and
Councillor J. H. Whitehouse (Deputy Leader); and

(d) Loughton Residents Association Group:

Councillor C. P. Pond (Leader); and
Councillor D. Wixley (Deputy Leader);

(5) That Group Leaders confirmed nominations to the Proper Officer for the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees for 2017/18 by 24 May 2017;

(6) That the appointments to Outside Organisations carrying out Council Regulatory or non-Cabinet functions, as set out at Appendix 4 to these minutes be noted ; and

(7) That the appointments made by the Leader of the Council to Outside Organisations carrying out Executive Functions, as set out at Appendix 5, to these minutes be noted.

11. COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - CO-OPTION OF EPPING FOREST YOUTH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Mover: Councillor M Sartin (Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny)

Councillor M Sartin reported that the Communities Select Committee had agreed that it would like to invite a representative of the Youth Council to be co-opted to attend it's meetings from the 2017/18 municipal year. The appointment of a non-voting co-opted member to a select committee required the agreement of the Council in accordance with Paragraph 6 of Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Constitution.

RESOLVED:

(1) That a non-voting co-opted Epping Forest Youth Council representative be appointed to the Communities Select Committee for the 2017/18 Municipal Year; and

(2) That the representative be either one person or a rotating representative, as agreed by the Youth Council.

12. SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL

The Council's Constitution required that the scheme of delegations be agreed at the Annual Council. The current scheme had received no further additions or amendments since the last annual meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Scheme of delegations – Delegated by or on behalf of the Council be noted.

13. COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2017/18

On 20 December 2016, the Council had adopted a calendar of meetings for the period of May 2017 to May 2018, which had included the ordinary meetings of the Council. The Council's Constitution required that a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council were approved at the annual meeting. The Council also noted the change of date for the July 2017 meeting.

RESOLVED:

(1) That during 2017/18 ordinary meetings of the Council be held on the following dates:

27 July 2017;
26 September 2017;
2 November 2017;
21 December 2017;
22 February 2018;
24 April 2018; and
24 May 2018.

CHAIRMAN

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CABINET & CABINET COMMITTEES - LEADER NOMINATIONS 2017/18

(a) Deputy Leader

	2017/18
Deputy Leader	S A Stavrou

(b) Other Cabinet Members/Allocation of Portfolios

Portfolio	Portfolio Holder 2017/18
Leader	C Whitbread
Asset Management & Economic Development	A Grigg
Environment	W Breare-Hall
Finance	G Mohindra
Planning & Governance	J Philip
Housing	S A Stavrou
Leisure & Community Services	H Kane
Safer, Greener & Transport	G Waller
Technology & Support Services	A Lion

(c) Cabinet Committee Memberships (not part of pro rata allocations)

(i) Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee

Finance Portfolio Holder (Chairman)
 Leader
 Housing Portfolio Holder
 Planning & Governance Portfolio Holder
 Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder

(ii) Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee

Asset Management and Economic Development Portfolio Holder (Chairman)
 Environment Portfolio Holder
 Finance Portfolio Holder
 Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder
 Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder

(iii) Local Plan Cabinet Committee

Planning & Governance Portfolio Holder (Chairman)
 Leader
 Asset Management and Economic Development Portfolio Holder
 Housing
 Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder

(iv) Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee

Housing Portfolio Holder (Chairman)
 Planning & Governance Portfolio Holder

Environment Portfolio Holder
Finance Portfolio Holder
Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder

Part3
Scheme of Delegation
Appendix 4
Portfolio Responsibilities

See the Article relating to Decision Making for limits of delegation

Leaders Portfolio

Cabinet Chairman, Signatory for decisions taken in absence of other portfolio holders or where they have a material (Disclosable or personal) interest, Co-ordination of Cabinet business, Corporate Objectives, performance indicators and improvement plans, as well as the equality duties of the Council. Transformation and Customer Service, including compliments and complaints. Representation of the Council across established forums and meetings. Liaison with Chief Executive, Directors and Leadership Team.

Finance

Budget setting and reporting, financial management including investments, procurement and insurance. Risk Management. Responsibility for finance functions including Accountancy, Housing Benefits, Council Tax and NNDR, Cashiers. Welfare Reform. Debt and recovery.

Technology and Support Services

Matters related to the Council's ICT team and future strategy. Those support services within the remit of the Resources Directorate, for example, Human Resources, Payroll, Administration, Reprographics, Health and Safety, Facilities management. Audit including Corporate Fraud, and matters related to Legal Services. Broadband for the District.

Planning and Governance

Democratic Services, Public Relations and Information including the website provision, Elections section, Freedom of information, Matters relating to Development Control, Enforcement, Building Control and Local Land Charges. All matters related to the delivery of the Local Plan, Planning Policy and large scale Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy agreements.

Asset Management and Economic Development

Commercial property, estates and asset management (including North Weald airfield assets) and economic development/tourism. Business Champion.

Housing

Deputy Leader. Council housing and housing land sales, proposals for affordable housing. Homelessness and its prevention, HRA estate management, investment, tenant matters including transfers and maintenance/repairs. Sheltered and private sector housing. Decent homes and adaptations. Careline and Care and Repair. Park Homes.

Safer, Greener, Transport

Community Safety, Safeguarding, Premises & Taxi Licensing, Conservation, Countrycare, Tree Protection, Energy Efficiency, Energy conservation, Fuel Poverty, Car Parking & NEPP Liaison, Highways Liaison, Public Transport Liaison, Community Transport.

Environment

Environmental Health matters and management, waste management, pollution and land drainage/sewers and Emergency Planning. Statutory nuisances, abandoned vehicles and animal welfare. Environmental co-ordination. Depots management and Fleet Operations. Grounds maintenance and Roding Valley LNR.

Leisure and Community Services

Leisure Management. North Weald Airfield (Operations). Neighbourhood services

Health and sport. Arts, Community and Sports Development including holiday schemes, Museum Services, Young people and Youth Council. Grant Aid requests. A champion for the voluntary sector.

COMMITTEE ETC. NOMINATIONS 2017/18

AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE EAST (19 MEMBERS) (NOT PRO RATA)*						
	Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	S Jones				
	Vice-Chairman	P Keska				
		N Avey		B Surtees		R. Morgan
		N Bedford		JH Whitehouse		
		T Boyce		JM Whitehouse		
		H Brady				
		W Breare-Hall				
		A Grigg				
		S Jones				
		P Keska				
		M McEwen				
		J Philip				
		B Rolfe				
		D Stallan				
		G Waller				
	C Whitbread					
	H Whitbread					

*Membership of Area Plans Sub-Committee East comprises all members of the relevant wards.

AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE WEST (14 MEMBERS) (NOT PRO RATA)*

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	G Shiell					
	Vice-Chairman	E Webster					
		R Bassett				R Butler	D Dorrell
		R Gadsby					
		L Hughes					
		H Kane					
		S Kane					
		Y Knight					
		J Lea					
		A Mitchell					
		M Sartin					
		G Shiell					
		S Stavrou					
	E Webster						

Membership of Area Plans Sub-Committee West comprises all members of the relevant wards.

AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE SOUTH (25 MEMBERS - SUBJECT TO 'OPT IN') (NOT PRO RATA)*							
		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	G Chambers					
	Vice-Chairman	A Patel					
		G Chambers	S Heap		R Baldwin		
		K Chana	S Neville		A Beales		
		J Knapman			R Jennings		
		A Lion			J Jennings		
		B Sandler			H Kauffman		
		D Sunger			CC Pond		
		A Patel			CP Pond		
		G Mohindra			C Roberts		
					D Roberts		
					D Wixley		
					L Girling		
				L Mead			

Membership of Area Plans Sub-Committee South comprises all members of the relevant wards, subject to opt-in. Each member above has opted-in for 2017/18. Councillors R Brookes and S. Murray have opted-out for 2017/18. No indication had been received Councillor S Watson 2017/18.

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (5 MEMBERS PLUS 2 CO-OPTED PERSONS)*								
		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members	
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	The chairman of the Committee is appointed at first meeting in each municipal year						
		J Knapman		JM Whitehouse	R Jennings			
		L Hughes						
		A Patel						

*The Vice-Chairmanship of the Audit and Governance Committee is assumed by a co-opted person if the Chairman is a Member, and vice versa.

CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP (11 MEMBERS)

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	M McEwen					
	Vice-Chairman	M Sartin					
		M McEwen		JH Whitehouse	CC Pond		D Dorrell
		J Philip			CP Pond		
		L Hughes					
		M Sartin					
		D Stallan					
		G Waller					
	S Kane						

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (15 MEMBERS)*

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	B Sandler					
	Vice-Chairman	B Rolfe					
		G Shiell	S Heap	JM Whitehouse	R Jennings		R Morgan
		H Brady			H Kauffman		
		G Chambers			CC Pond		
		S Jones					
		J Knapman					
		D Stallan					
		B Rolfe					
	B Sandler						
	S Kane						

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (9 MEMBERS PLUS 9 STAFF SIDE REPRESENTATIVES)*							
		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Vice-Chairman*	A Lion					
		S Kane		B Surtees	R Baldwin		
		J Knapman			C Roberts		
		A Lion					
		G Chambers					
		J Philip					
		G Waller					

*The Chairmanship of the Joint Consultative Committee is to be assumed by a Staff-Side representative for 2017/18.

LICENSING COMMITTEE (AND SUB-COMMITTEE) (15 MEMBERS*)

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman			B Surtees			
	Vice-Chairman						R Morgan
		N Bedford	S Neville	B Surtees	J Jennings		R Morgan (Con Nomination)
		L Hughes			CP Pond		D Dorrell
		K Chana			L Mead		
		D Sunger					
		P Keska					
		A Lion					
		B Rolfe					
		M Sartin					
Licensing Sub-Cttee Chairmen (6)	P Keska M Sartin	S Neville	B Surtees	J Jennings		R Morgan	

*The Licensing Act 2003 requires that the Licensing Committee comprise no more than 15 members. Licensing Sub-Committees should comprise no more than 3 members.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (15 MEMBERS)

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	M Sartin					
	Vice-Chairman				R Brookes		
		N Avey	S Neville	B Surtees	R Baldwin		S Murray
		N Bedford			R Brookes		
		S Kane			D Wixley		
		A Mitchell					
		A Patel					
		H Whitbread					
		M Sartin					
		Y Knight					
		D Stallan					

STANDARDS COMMITTEE (9 MEMBERS)

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	G Chambers					
	Vice-Chairman				C P Pond		
		G Chambers		JH Whitehouse	C P Pond		
		S Kane			C Roberts		
		M McEwen					
		A Mitchell					
		B Rolfe					
	N Avey						

STAFF APPEALS PANEL (5 MEMBERS AND 5 DEPUTIES)

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18	Chairman	To be determined at each meeting of the Panel					
	Vice-Chairman						
		G Chambers	S Neville		L Mead		
		B Rolfe	S Heap (Dep)		CP Pond (Dep)		
		B Sandler					
		L Hughes (Dep)					
		Y Knight (Dep)					
	A Mitchell (Dep)						

OTHER BODIES (NOT PRO-RATA)

LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT MONITORING BOARD (6 MEMBERS)*

		Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18		G Chambers		JM Whitehouse	R Brookes		R Morgan
		H Kane					
		P Keska					

PORTFOLIO HOLDER ADVISORY GROUP - LEISURE MANAGEMENT*						
	Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP 2017/18						

*Director of Neighbourhoods has advised that this Group is not required to be re-appointed for 2017/18

OFF STREET CAR PARKING CONTRACT MONITORING BOARD (NEW) (2 MEMEBRS PLUS 2 OFFICERS AND 4 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL'S OFF STREET CAR PARKING CONTRACTOR)						
	Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP	G Waller					
	N Bedford					

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WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD (2 MEMBERS PLUS 2 OFFICERS AND 4 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL'S WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACTOR)						
	Conservative Group	Green Party Group	Liberal Democrat Group	LRA Group	UKIP	Independent Members
MEMBERSHIP	Environment PH					
	Finance PH					

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REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS 2017/18

1. Council Appointments - Organisations Carrying Out Council Regulatory or Non-Cabinet Functions

Organisation and Allocation Category		Nominations for 2017/18
1.	Epping Forest Care and Repair Management Committee	A Grigg A Mitchell G Shiell
2.	Epping Forest Citizens' Advice Bureau	J Jennings J Knapman (Voting Member) K Chana
3.	Campaign to Protect Rural England (Essex Branch)	Y Knight TBC (Deputy)
4.	Epping Forest Community Transport Board of Trustees	G Waller
5.	Epping Forest Housing Aid Committee	J Lea
6.	Epping Forest Local Highways Panel	C Roberts N Avey R Bassett G Chambers J Knapman P Keska E Webster
7.	Epping Forest Local Liaison Group	L Hughes (BCEUN); G Chambers (BHW); W Breare-Hall (ELTC); N Avey (EH); CP Pond (LSJ); J Jennings (LSM); R Baldwin (LF); J Philip (TB); and S A Stavrou (WAHB).
8.	Essex Police and Crime Panel	G Waller
9.	Essex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Not required for 2017/18. Check appointment of Essex County Council.
10.	Grange Farm Managing Trustees (Term to 31.5.19)	Not required for 2017/18
11.	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (Term to 30.6.21)	Two four-year appointments from 1-Jul-17: M Sartin S A Stavrou

Organisation and Allocation Category		Nominations for 2017/18
12.	Leisure Centres Liaison Groups: (a) Epping Sports Centre (b) Ongar Leisure Centre (c) Loughton Leisure Centre (d) Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool	H Whitbread W Breare-Hall N Bedford P Keska G Chambers A Patel J Lea G Shiell
13.	Epping Forest Local Councils Liaison Committee	D Stallan J Lea M Sartin B Rolfe E Webster J H Whitehouse A Boyce
14	Outer North-East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	A Patel
15.	Princess Alexandra Hospital - Partnership Governor	A Patel
16.	Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve: (a) Management Committee (b) Working Group	S Murray Officer Representative - TBC
17.	Stansted Airport Consultative Committee	M Sartin G Waller (Deputy)
18.	Stansted Airport Community Trust Fund	R Morgan

Organisation and Allocation Category		Nominations for 2017/18
19.	Town Centre Partnerships:	
	(a) Buckhurst Hill Village Forum	G Chambers A Patel S Heap
	(b) Epping Town Centre Partnership	N Avey H Whitbread
	(c) Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership	C Roberts (voting) D Roberts
	(d) Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership	A Beales J Jennings
	(e) Ongar Town Forum (Steering Group)	N Bedford P Keska B Surtees
	(f) Waltham Abbey Town Partnership	H Kane J Lea
20.	Voluntary Action Epping Forest	B Rolfe
21.	Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills Ltd	H Kane
22.	Waltham Abbey Tourist Information Centre (Joint Management Committee)	E Webster A Mitchell J Lea
23.	West Essex Wellbeing Joint Committee	G Mohindra A Patel

2. Appointments Held by Officers – Organisations Carrying Out Executive Functions (Appointments by the Leader)

	Organisation and Committee Responsible	Representative 2017/18
1.	Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH)	Director of Communities (or representative)
2.	National Society for Clean Air (SE Division)	Director of Neighbourhoods (or representative)
3.	Standing Conference – Investigation of Air Pollution	Director of Neighbourhoods (or representative)

	Organisation and Committee Responsible	Representative 2017/18
4.	Roding Valley Meadow Local Nature Reserve Working Group	Director of Neighbourhoods (or representative)

3. Appointments Held by Officers – Organisations Carrying Out Council Regulatory or Non-Executive Functions

This Appendix indicates those organisations where the Council determined on 25 April 1995 that the representatives should be officers.

	Organisation and Committee Responsible	Representative
1.	Essex Water Safety Liaison Committee	Director of Neighbourhoods (or representative)
2.	Voluntary Action Epping Forest (see also member appointments schedule)	Grants Officer (+one member)

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS 2017/18

1. Leader Appointments - Organisations Carrying Out Executive Functions

Organisation and Allocation Category		Nominations for 2017/18
1.	Association of Retained Council Housing - Executive Board	Housing Portfolio Holder (see also Officer appointment)
2.	Civil Enforcement of Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London - Adjudication Joint Committee	Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder
3.	Epping Forest District Community Safety Partnership	Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder Environment Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
4.	East of England Local Government Association	Leader
5.	Enfield, Essex and Hertfordshire Border Liaison Group	R Bassett M Sartin E Webster Y Knight (Deputy) J Lea (Deputy) G Shiell (Deputy)
6.	Epping Forest District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP): (a) LSP Board; (b) Health Equalities Group; (c) Safer Communities Partnership; (d) Sustainable Communities Group; (e) Epping Forest Children's Partnership	Leader Finance Portfolio Holder B Sandler Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder E Webster
7.	Essex Community Wide Traveller Unit	Planning & Governance Portfolio Holder
8.	Essex Waste Partnership - Inter-Authority Member Working Group	Environment Portfolio Holder Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder (Deputy)

Organisation and Allocation Category		Nominations for 2017/18
9.	Harlow Stansted Gateway Transportation Board	Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
10.	Local Government Association - General Assembly	Leader Deputy Leader
12.	North Essex Parking Partnership	Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder Environment Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
13.	South East Local Enterprise Partnership	Leader Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder
14.	Waste Management Partnership Board	Environment Portfolio Holder Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
15.	West Essex Alliance	Leader Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder (Deputy)
16.	Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board (New for 2017/18)	Planning & Governance Portfolio Holder

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Assets & Economic Development

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Grigg

Recommending:

That the report of the Economic Development Portfolio Holder be noted.

1. Visitor Economy

Tourism Website - The new tourism website continues to build both in content and page views. To date 137 pages have been produced containing over 250 images. Page views continue to build and have reached record highs of 6,000 and 7,000 average per week over the Easter holidays and May half term holidays with a peak of 8250 during one week.

2017 Tourism Conference- Friday 20th October has been booked for the 2017 Tourism Conference which is once again hosted and sponsored by the Marriott Hotel Waltham Abbey. The latest annual tourism and visitor figures presented this year show growth once again with the income breaking the £200m mark at £204m and the district's tourism-related jobs rising from 7% to 8%. Day trips have also risen by 6%. It is only the overnight visit numbers and related income that remains unchanged in a sector challenged by a shortfall in accommodation provision

2. Town Centres

Town & Village Centres / District Economic Opportunities Fund - The first stage of the Ongar In Bloom project supported by the Town Centre Opportunities Fund has now been installed delivering a striking and colourful entrance to the town centre. Buckhurst Hill Residents Society is part way through a project to increase people's awareness of the business offer in Queens Road through engagement between school children and these businesses. A first tranche of children have visited Queens Road on several occasions, interviewed businesses, produced promotional material for them and held a market outside these businesses. Epping Town Partnership hosted the Epping Young Traders Market & Festival on 8th July. The event was a success bringing energy and vibrancy to the high street and attracting large numbers of visitors to enjoy the markets stalls predominantly operated by young entrepreneurs and the entertainment put on by local school students.

Waltham Abbey Wayfinding Project - A number of land ownership issues are being worked through to determine the acceptability of a number of the proposed locations for signs and this has slowed the delivery stage of the project. It is hoped that once these issues have been resolved, the necessary planning and highways permissions can be determined and the installation work will follow soon after that, although that work is now likely to take place outside of the 2017 Summer season.

3. Business Support

Eastern Plateau - The Economic Development Team continues to be active on the Eastern Plateau Local Area Action Group (LAG) and a first project has been awarded in the District for just under £14,000.

Trade Delegation on 16th June 2017 - The Chairman, Cllr Stallan together with Members of the Council and colleagues from Essex County Council, hosted a visit for 11 delegates from a local authority and businesses in KeQaio, China. Presentations were made by Cllr Mohindra setting out the major priorities of the County regarding building partnerships with China and attracting inward investment. This was followed by a presentation on tourism development in the area and a tour of the District, hosted by a local tourism company. The Team will continue to work to develop links with a view to future investment opportunities.

4. Major Projects

As Members will be aware, the Council is actively engaged in a number of major asset management projects. Monitoring of the delivery is reported to the Asset Management and Economic Cabinet Committee on a regular basis and if Members have a particular interest in any project they can refer. However, I would like to draw attention to the fact that we have achieved practical completion of the main Shopping Park from our contractors McLaughlin and Harvey, who have delivered the building on time and on cost. The Council has secured a good tenant mix with several national anchor stores e.g. Next, TK Max and Aldi. The units are 80%+ let and our tenants are currently actively engaged in fitting out their stores with the majority set to open by the end of September. The supporting S278 Highways Improvements have experienced a number of technical problems, largely in relation to services and utilities, but I am pleased to report should be largely complete by the end of August in advance of the Park opening.

A site visit for all Members had been arranged for the 21 July 2017 at 10.30 a.m.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Environment

Portfolio Holder: Councillor W Breare-Hall

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management

ECC has published the first draft of the County's waste and recycling performance for 2016/17. The final figures will be published when all the data has been audited, but it is unlikely this process will significantly alter the results. I am pleased to inform Members that we have performed better than last year with a recycling rate of 58.3%. This is excellent news and I would like to thank our residents, for their ongoing commitment to recycling, and the Council's officers and contractor.

I previously informed Members that after the successful launch of the recycling scheme in the Civic Offices we would introduce a similar scheme at the Council's depot in Oakwood Hill. I am pleased to report that officers in the Waste Management team, in conjunction with Facilities Management and the Environmental Coordinator, have now introduced that scheme.

Members will be aware that the Council was successful in obtaining a significant grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for the introduction of a Recycling Rewards Scheme. Officers, working closely with DCLG, have conducted market research to establish the scope of a scheme tailored to the needs of the District. The procurement exercise for appointing a suitable contractor to implement the scheme is underway. Tenders are currently being assessed and it is anticipated that the contract will be awarded by the time this report is presented. The first phase of the project, which will start in September/October, will consist of door knocking activities in selected blocks of flats. The scheme will also consist of improved information in communal recycling bin stores to help residents reduce contamination. A key element of the scheme is the creation of a website to promote and issue recycling rewards to blocks of flats based on their recycling performance. I have asked officers to provide further information via the Bulletin.

The joint campaign with ECC to increase the number of items donated to Epping Forest Reuse has resulted in an additional nine tonnes being directed to them over two months.

The new national strategy on street cleansing has been issued and we will be working with Biffa to identify how it can be applied to the District.

Fly-tipping

Michelle Pettengell, of Eversley Close, Loughton, was arrested after failing to attend court, fined £200 and ordered to pay £400 towards the Council's prosecution costs, together with a

Victim Surcharge of £30 after she admitted failing to comply with her waste household duty of care at a hearing on 24 April 2017 in Chelmsford Magistrates.

She had carried out work at her property and had allowed a man who had knocked on her door to take it for £40 cash in hand without checking that the person taking the waste was registered to do so. Her waste was later found fly-tipped in a garage area in Pyrles Lane, Loughton.

This is exactly the type of case that the Council's Environment & Neighbourhood Officers are hoping can be avoided in the future by raising awareness of the waste duty of care, through joining forces with Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) and other local authorities in Essex to promote that it is a "*Crime Not to Care*".

Eleven authorities across Essex, including Essex County Council, have signed up to promote the duty of care message using KBT artwork. A six week campaign is planned for September 2017 followed by prolonged use of the artwork and campaign material to raise awareness of the duty of care, and to reduce the amount of waste getting into the hands of rogue traders who fly-tip for profit. Officers recommend that whenever businesses or householders give their waste to somebody else to dispose of, they should always "Check, Challenge & Record", to ensure they comply with their waste duty of care responsibilities. Businesses and householders who fail in their duty can expect to be prosecuted.

Wood yard dust and fire - Birchwood Industrial Estate, Hoe Lane, Nazeing

Council officers served abatement notices on the occupiers of the site on 10 May 2017 under s.80 Environmental Protection Act 1990 to control wood dust emissions, after visits on 8 and 9 May 2017, that confirmed earlier concerns about the lack of dust suppression on the site.

The notices require the operators to "cease wood recycling activities and wood handling activities, where dust suppression and handling techniques do not sufficiently suppress wood dust and contain it within the site boundary".

At the same time, officers notified Essex Fire Service and the Environment Agency (EA) regarding the potential for a fire on the site and strongly suggested to the EA that they remove forthwith the exemption that the site operates under. The exemption allows the site to accept, store and shred wood (without a waste permit issued by the EA) subject to a number of conditions.

The EA confirmed they would be visiting and removing the exemption, however before that could take place, there was another large fire on the site on 16 May, which burnt any remaining un-shredded wood. The exact cause of the fire is unknown. It is alleged that old shredded wood on the site was spontaneously combusting, spreading and igniting new waste wood.

Potential waste offence investigations are ongoing at EFDC and at the EA. The EA removed the original waste exemption, but a new exemption was immediately registered. At this time the site is not operating but the long term plans of the site owner are unknown so officers will continue to monitor the situation and liaise with the EA.

Out of hours noise service

At this time of the year, noise complaints increase as windows and doors are left open and activities move outside. The Council provides a restricted call-out service for noise complaints covered by Environment & Neighbourhood officers on a stand-by rota.

The service can be accessed by telephoning 01992 564000, however residents are always encouraged to initially report noise issues in normal working hours, so that officers can provide advice and try to establish if the matter can be resolved informally. Further information is available on the EFDC website.

Public Health Team

The Public Health Team promoted National Clean Air Day on 15th June. Claire Jaggard, Environmental Protection Officer, led the campaign for the Council by focusing on primary schools and idling cars during pick up times. A range of posters and electronic communications were sent to schools for dissemination to pupils and parents. On the Day itself, officers were outside one school in Buckhurst Hill handing out leaflets, stickers and posters for children to colour in, as well as speaking to parents who were sat in idling vehicles in the nearby streets. Additionally, a range of social media messages were published utilising the councils Twitter and Facebook accounts supported by the Public Relations Team.

There is provision under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002 for authorised officers to issue fixed penalty notices (£20) to drivers who refuse to turn their engines off when asked. The Council is actively considering using these powers as part of a package of measures to tackle air pollution.

The Public Health Team are utilising social media to promote catering businesses who attain and retain the highest food hygiene rating of 5.

And finally, the Public Health Team recently executed a warrant in a joint investigation with Essex Trading Standards and supported by Essex Police. The investigation surrounds the alleged illegal slaughter and provision of unfit meat. The investigations remain ongoing so no more information can be provided at this time but I will update Members when I can.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Finance Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Mohindra

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance Portfolio Holder be noted

Accountancy

The Accountancy team are busy dealing with our external auditors as the audit of the draft Statutory Statement of Accounts is now underway. Once the audit has concluded the Accounts will be presented to Council on 26 September. The outturn reports for both revenue and capital were presented to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 22 June and the Resources Select Committee on 13 July. I do not want to repeat the contents of those reports but, as not all of you will have attended one of those meetings, it is worth giving you the headlines.

The revenue outturn showed that the Council had used more reserves than had been estimated. It was anticipated in the revised estimates that £0.777 million would be used from reserves, but the outturn actually saw £1.065 million of the General Fund balance being used. However, the outturn did include the use of an additional £1 million of revenue funding for the capital programme. The variance excluding the capital funding was an underspend of £929,000, of which £871,000 related to the opening Continuing Services Budget (CSB). The in-year changes on the CSB were £572,000 which was very close to the revised estimate of £630,000. The larger variance on the opening CSB was made up of savings on salaries, housing benefit, and consultancy. There was also a smaller movement than anticipated in the provision for bad and doubtful debts and higher rental income.

It should be remembered that the gross expenditure budget is approximately £74 million so the overall variance is not significant. It is also worth repeating that the use of reserves of £1.065 million was after charging £1 million of capital expenditure, so if we had decided to fund the capital expenditure in a different way the General Fund would have achieved a break even position for 2016/17.

The outturn on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was a surplus of £651,000. This was £157,000 better than the revised estimate, largely due to savings on revenue expenditure. Consequently the HRA revenue balance is higher than expected as is the balance on the Major Repairs Reserve. This will be reviewed when the financing of the capital programme for 2017/18 is considered. The combined balance on the Housing Repairs Fund, the Major Repairs Reserve and the HRA revenue balance is a healthy £17.64 million.

The capital outturn detailed spending of £37 million on a range of schemes, this was some £6.1 million below the revised estimate. The two largest areas of slippage on non-housing items were the road works for the shopping park (£1.06 million) and the

lease transaction with the car dealership (£0.99 million), which completed in April. Amounts of £3.1 million (General Fund) and £3.3 million (HRA) will be carried forward to 2017/18 to allow for completion of the various projects.

Having mentioned the outturn for 2016/17 I need to move on to the Council's budget for 2018/19. We will again start the budget cycle earlier by bringing forward the presentation of the Financial Issues Paper from the September meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee to July. Last year this allowed for a wider consultation and consideration of the options to achieve the necessary savings. The extra meeting of the Cabinet Committee will take place on 20 July, after the deadline for the completion of this report but before Council, and the Financial Issues Paper will be presented to this meeting together with an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Benefits

On 22 June the Finance Cabinet Committee received the outturns for the Key Performance Indicators for 2016/17. I am pleased to report that both the performance targets for Benefits were achieved. Average performance of 21.83 days was achieved for processing new claims, which beat the target of 22 days. Changes of circumstance were processed in an average of 4.77 days which beat the target of 6 days.

On 11 July Cabinet approved the items to be consulted on as part of the process of constructing the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19. The scheme is still operating effectively and no significant changes are planned for next year.

Revenues

The Key Performance Indicators for Revenues also met their targets for the year. The in year collection rate achieved for Council Tax for 2016/17 was 98% which exceeded the target of 97%. The in year collection rate of 97.75% for non-domestic rates was also better than the target of 97.7%.

A new rating list came into effect for non-domestic rates for 2017/18, together with a revised system for businesses to use if they want to check, challenge or appeal the valuation determined by the Valuation Office Agency. This has created a lot of additional work, with assistance and advice being given to many businesses.

The release of guidance on discretionary relief for business rates was delayed by the general election but has now been received. Officers are working with colleagues from across Essex to devise a scheme which should be available for Cabinet to consider in the autumn.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Housing

Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Stavrou

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing Portfolio Holder be noted.

The Council's approach to Fire Safety for its housing stock following the Grenfell Tower fire

1. We were all devastated to hear about the tragic loss of life as a result on the horrendous fire at Grenfell Tower in the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in June. Understandably, both members and officers have received a number of enquiries from tenants, leaseholders and others about the Council's approach to fire safety.

2. Shortly after the fire occurred, our Director of Communities provided comprehensive information for members in the Council Bulletin summarising the Council's approach to fire safety. An Information Note for the public was also produced and published on the Council's website along similar lines, with associated publicity.

3. Fundamentally, the Council has always taken fire safety and the safety of residents very seriously, and our officers have worked very hard over many years to continue to improve fire safety in our housing stock. I hope that the information we have been providing recently gives both members and the public some reassurance on the Council's approach.

4. However, I thought it would be helpful to summarise some of the key points of the Council's approach to fire safety in this Portfolio Holder report to Council which are as follows:

- The Council has no high rise blocks of flats - the highest blocks of flats we have are just 5-storey, at Limes Avenue and Copperfield in Chigwell. They comprise flats on the ground floor (owned and managed by London and Quadrant Housing Trust) with two levels of Council-owned 2-storey maisonettes above. However, they are not enclosed blocks – all of the residents' front doors are accessed from open deck-access walkways.
- We have a number of blocks of flats that are four stories high - in most cases accessed by internal communal stairways. In the event of a fire, they are of a sufficient height that can be accessed by the Fire Service to rescue people if required.
- In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Housing Act 2004, officers and consultants undertake Fire Safety Risk Assessments of all the communal areas in our blocks of flats. They are categorised into "low" and "high risk" buildings. A specialist fire safety company undertakes the more complex Fire Safety

Risk Assessments of our “high risk” buildings. Coincidentally, and somewhat reassuringly, the Fire Safety Risk Assessments for all of our “high risk” buildings were completed in the month immediately before the Grenfell Tower - we are just awaiting the written reports.

- Fire Safety Risk Assessments for “low risk” buildings are undertaken by our Housing Assets Team on a rolling programme – and all “low risk” blocks have had a Fire Safety Risk Assessment within the last 2 years.
- Fire Safety Risk Assessments cover a number of aspects. They consider both the physical environment of communal areas (e.g. gas pipes, fire extinguishers, condition of fire doors) and any hazards (e.g. obstructions, unauthorised carpets and other floor coverings). Reports are produced for each inspection and any required actions are identified and recorded.
- In the past, asking tenants and leaseholders to take identified actions following Fire Safety Risk Assessment inspections is often problematical - since they invariably involve asking tenants to remove things like flower pots, children’s equipment, buggies, carpets, rugs etc. from communal areas. Indeed, many Members will recall the lengthy debates about this issue, following complaints and opposition from tenants and leaseholders about the Council’s approach to fire safety at the time, which my predecessor persistently adhered to – our housing officers therefore work very hard to pursue these issues, often in the continuing face of strong opposition from tenants.
- Following Fire Safety Risk Assessments that were undertaken in the past, in 2016, officers undertook a comprehensive review of the number and location of fire extinguishers in communal areas - which resulted in a number of additional fire extinguishers being provided and others being re-located. This was in addition to the ongoing programme of planned individual fire extinguisher checks.
- Co-incidentally, a pre-planned Internal Audit Study of Fire Safety Risk Assessments is included as part of the Council’s Audit Plan for 2017/18, which has already commenced and is currently in progress. The Audit Report will be processed and reported in the usual way, with any recommendations listed and monitored through Internal Audit’s “Audit Recommendation Tracker”, which is overseen by the Audit and Governance Committee.
- We have just completed a programme of installing hard-wired linked smoke and heat detectors in all of our Council properties. These detectors are connected to the property’s electrical wiring, which means that they are not reliant on the tenants changing batteries – although they do have a battery back-up as well. In two-storied buildings (e.g. houses), if one smoke detector is activated from smoke or heat, the other detector sounds as well. They are checked annually by the Council.
- We have also recently completed a programme of installing 30-minute fire resistant front doors to Council flats in blocks. Since it is the responsibility of leaseholders to install doors to their own properties, in order to encourage and assist leaseholders (and to improve the overall fire safety in blocks of flats), members agreed an initiative a number of years ago to offer leaseholders a discount of 75% from the cost of installing these

doors, at the same time as we are installing them to the Council's properties in their block.

- At the June meeting of the Communities Select Committee, held shortly after the Grenfell Tower fire, the Select Committee agreed to a recommendation from the Director of Communities that it receives a detailed report in September on the Council's approach to fire safety and associated issues – and any further improvements that could be made. This will also give an opportunity for members to ask officers any questions on the approach.
- The Council is not required to provide, and has not provided, sprinkler systems in any of our properties. This may be an issue that the Communities Select Committee will possibly want to consider, together with the associated issues and costs.
- Fire alarms are installed in all of the Council's sheltered housing schemes, Norway House Homeless Persons Hostel, North Weald and Hemnall House, Epping – which are regularly tested and serviced. Fire alarms at sheltered housing schemes and Norway House are also linked to the Council's Careline Service. They will continue to be linked in this way to the new provider's centre when the Careline Alarm Monitoring Service is outsourced.
- Fire drills are held every six months at all of the Council's sheltered housing schemes, and more regularly (every three months) at Norway House. The approach that has always been taken to our sheltered housing schemes and Norway House, based on the advice of the Essex Fire and Rescue Service, is to adopt an "Evacuate Policy" and not a "Stay Put Policy".
- A few blocks of flats across the District have external cladding – but none have the same cladding as used at Grenfell Tower, which is Aluminium Composite Material (ACM). However, as a precaution, the Director of Communities has asked the Housing Assets Team to check on the type of cladding used on all the Council's blocks of flats in the district - to assess whether or not, in the light of the Grenfell Tower, there are any issues or concerns that the Council needs to be aware of, and any action required. I will, of course, advise Members if any concerns do come to light
- I have reported below on a visit and tour of Norway House Homeless Persons Hostel for Members of the Communities Select Committee and the Cabinet which, co-incidentally, was held just before the Grenfell Tower fire. Members asked a number of questions about fire safety at Norway House and saw for themselves the physical environment and safeguards taken. Both the Leader and I, together with (I believe) the other Members in attendance, were very satisfied and re-assured with what we saw and heard with regard to fire safety at Norway House.
- Since the Grenfell Tower fire, I have been visiting the larger blocks of Council flats in the District, accompanied by the Ward Councillors, to see for myself the approach taken to fire safety on the Council's estates. At the time of writing, I have already visited the Limes Farm Estate, Chigwell and am next scheduled to visit the Springfields Estate in Waltham Abbey.

5. In conclusion, neither Members nor officers are ever complacent about fire safety, but I hope that the information provided to Members and the public to date gives some reassurance of our approach to fire safety, and the measures that we have put in place over a number of years to mitigate the effect of any fires occurring in our properties, particularly blocks of flats. However, we will continue to identify and consider any additional measures that we feel are necessary in the light of experience and guidance.

Members visit to Norway House Homeless Persons Hostel, North Weald

6. The Communities Directorate arranged a visit to Norway House Homeless Persons Hostel for all Members of the Cabinet and the Communities Select Committee on 16th June 2017.

7. Norway House was purchased by the Council in 1974 from the Ministry of Defence as the Council's primary temporary accommodation for homeless households, which continues to be the case to this day.

8. Following a brief introduction by the Director of Communities, the Hostel Manager, Sarah Smith gave a very interesting and informative tour of the building and grounds, including the chalets and the location of the 3 proposed pods to accommodate 6 single homeless people. Members saw the benefit of recent improvement works to the building, including the provision of communal kitchens and individual bathrooms for all households.

9. All the members that I spoke to were, like me, extremely impressed with how well the Hostel is being managed; how clean and well-maintained the building is kept; and how caring and understanding the staff are towards their residents, often under difficult circumstances, to make the residents' stay comfortable whilst they are coming to terms with the effects and implications of their homelessness.

Flexible Homelessness support Grant – update

10. At its meeting on 15 June 2017, the Cabinet agreed that the Government's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (required to be ring fenced to be used on homelessness services), already received by the Council in the sum of £277,000 in 2017/2018 and £313,000 to be received in 2018/2019 be initially used by the Council to continue working with Genesis Housing Association in order to provide private rented accommodation to homeless applicants in order to prevent homelessness, with a budget of £60,000 in both 2017/2018 and 2018/19 to fund the cost of the Association's Management Fees.

11. It was further agreed that following the cut in housing related support funding by Essex County Council, the Council meets its own housing related support costs at the young parents scheme Railway Meadow, Ongar with a budget of £29,000 in both 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.

12. A number of homelessness initiatives already agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 2 February 2017 (Minute 130 refers) in the sum of £43,500 in both 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 will also be met from the grant resulting in a saving to the General Fund.

13. A further report will be submitted to the Cabinet later in the year for consideration to be given for the use of the balance of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of around £131,000 in 2017/2018 & £167,000 in 2018/2019.

14. I will be meeting with officers in the near future to consider other homelessness initiatives to be funded from the grant, and also options for the use of any additional grant the Council may receive from Government in order to provide financial support to help us meet with new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme

15. On 5 September 2017, the Communities Select Committee will be considering a report on the Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme. Following the meeting, officers will be drafting a revised Scheme which will be considered by an external Legal Advisor. When advice has been received the draft Scheme will be amended in accordance with the advice. The Council will then enter into a 12 week consultation with every private Registered Social Landlord of social housing with which it has nomination arrangements, Town and Parish Councils, the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and partner agencies with an interest in the Scheme. The Scheme will then be considered by the Cabinet around February/March 2017. The new Scheme will come into force as soon as time allows for re-registrations and verifications of all home seekers currently registered.

Out sourcing of the Careline Alarm Monitoring Service

16. At its meeting on 2 February 2017 (Minute 121 refers), the Cabinet agreed that the Careline Alarm Monitoring Service be outsourced to an external provider. The procurement process is being managed by the procurement arm of the North Housing Consortium (NHC), of which the Council is a member, using a Framework Agreement procured in accordance with EU rules which the Council is able to use. In accordance with the timetable set out by the NHC it is planned to complete the process and outsource the service by mid-November 2017.

Update on the Council House-building Programme

Phase One – Waltham Abbey

17. In April 2017, we took possession of the first houses to be built by the Council in over 30-years. Two new three bedroom houses were completed on the Red Cross site at Roundhills and handed over by the Contractor P A Finlay & Co Ltd. These were let on the same day to two families from the Council's Housing Register. Four further three bedroom houses on the same site were handed over and let in May 2017. The next handovers will be six two bedroom houses.

18. This will be followed by nine; one and two bedroom flats at Harveyfields in August 2017 which will be named "John Scott Court". The Council will be holding a formal opening ceremony to celebrate the opening of the new block. This will take place early in October 2017. Further details will be published nearer the time in the Council Bulletin.

19. The final two duplex homes on the Red Cross site will complete the Phase when the expected handover takes place around September 2017.

Phases Two and Three – North Weald, Epping and Coopersale

20. The Contractors on each of the sites making up Phases Two and Three continue to make progress with works on site, with the exception of the Queens Road development in North Weald, where delays have been experienced due to on-going negotiations with UK-Power

Network over a lease for the new electrical sub-station and cable diversions that are required for the development.

Phases Four to Six – Various Locations in the District

21. Twenty-two sites making up Phases Four to Six have already obtained Planning Permission, which will deliver fifty-eight new Council homes. However, there are twelve sites that are to be referred back to the Council House-building Cabinet Committee where permission has been refused. These sites, if approved would have delivered thirty-three new homes in the form of one, two and three-bedroom houses and bungalows. The total cost of abortive fees associated with these sites stands at around £200,000. There are just four sites at Vere Road, Loughton; Pentlow Way, Buckhurst Hill; Woolard Street, Waltham Abbey; and St Peters Avenue, Ongar left to determine at the Planning stages. These four sites will deliver a total of thirty-four new homes if approved.

Review of the Housing Repairs Service

22. The contract with Mears, the Repairs Management Contractor will expire on 31 March 2020. Therefore, the Council is currently inviting Tenders from specialist Consultants to undertake an Options Appraisal for the future delivery of the Service which allows sufficient time to consider the way forward and procure the most suitable option. The core options appear to be an out-sourced single contract; in-house provision, using the Council's existing management, staff and operatives; insourced contract, using a Repairs Management Contractor to continue to deliver the service with the existing directly-employed staff; joint venture organisation; and a shared service with another organisation.

Housing Repairs - Relocation to Oakwood Hill, Loughton Depot - update

23. A Project Team of Officers has been set up, who have identified a number of options for how the Housing Repairs Service can relocate to the Oakwood Hill Depot in Loughton. Each of these options is being explored in more detail. Cost Consultants have been appointed and have been asked to provide an estimate for each option. These will be discussed with Cabinet Members once the cost estimates have been received.

Petition Received

24. In line with Council procedure, I would like to inform Members that a petition has been received, containing 56 signatories from residents at Parkfields and Hansells Mead, Roydon. The petition states that:

“Our Estate is a mess; the lorries have ruined the grass islands, curb stones are missing! People are having to park everywhere, even on the grass! We need parking spaces not messy grass verges”

25. In consultation with the Ward Councillor and myself, the following response was sent to the lead Petitioner:

“In terms of the damage to the kerbs and verges, the Council is aware that much of this damage is being caused by Lorries following satellite navigation devices directing them to the various farms and nurseries in the local area. The Council has been discussing this with land owners

and the County Council to try and educate drivers. I am aware signs have been erected by Essex County Council warning lorry drivers not to enter Parkfields as it is not suitable.

The Council is also already aware of the demand for parking in Parkfields, Roydon since it features on the Council's list of sites for Off Street Parking, and I can confirm the area has been surveyed and ranked alongside other sites in the district.

The Off Street Parking Programme is monitored very closely by the Cabinet, with the ranked list of streets being the subject of an annual review. Each year the Cabinet agrees the next set of sites to progress to the design, consultation, planning and then the build stages. However, with a need to make savings or generate additional income across the Council, at its meeting in October 2016 this Programme was identified as one that should be self-financed in the future. This could be either through pay and display, Residents Parking Scheme or controlled allocated parking.

Again, at its meeting in October 2016, the Cabinet agreed that for the time being, it is only the schemes that they have already committed would be constructed, and that any new schemes, of which Parkfields, Roydon is already on the list of possible future schemes, would only be added when the Cabinet undertakes its annual review of off street parking in February 2018.

In the meantime, the Housing Management Team and Housing Assets are looking into the damaged kerbs and grassed verges and will be looking to undertake repairs. Where the damage is to adopted land, then these will be referred to Essex County Council Highways."

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Leisure Management

After a successful period of mobilisation, the Council's new Leisure Management Contractor, Places for People (PfP) took over the day to day management of the Council's 4 Leisure Centres on the 1st April 2017. The vast majority of the staff previously employed by SLM Leisure Management TUPE transferred across to PfP, and customers therefore have seen little change in personnel and a great deal of continuity of services was achieved.

Since they took over, PfP have introduced a new booking system, which despite some initial teething issues, is now proving very popular with customers. A focus on increased standards of cleanliness has been undertaken to bring the Centres to the high standards PfP have committed to in the Contract. Preparatory works have been undertaken to bring forward refurbishment and extensions to the Centres. The most significant are the new Health and Fitness Extension at Loughton Leisure Centre and the new Leisure Centre at Waltham Abbey. I am pleased to report that the new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre at Hillhouse received full planning approval at this month's District Development Management Committee, with work scheduled to commence in early October.

Community Services

Community, Health and Wellbeing

Crucial Crew 2017: I was once again pleased to visit the Council's annual Crucial Crew event, which was held at Debden House in Loughton during a week in June, where our local primary school year 6 pupils took part in a range of interactive sessions to stimulate their awareness of staying safe, fit and healthy. This year, nearly 1,400 youngsters took part in Crucial Crew and were given advice on how to tackle or prevent the dangers they may encounter in everyday life, through participating in workshop scenario's focusing on;

- Road safety (Essex County Council)
- Vehicle blind spots (Sainsbury's)
- Building sites – dangers and hazards (Mears)
- Healthy relationships (Safer Places and Epping Forest District Council)
- Physical Activity (Epping Forest District Council)
- Bullying (Red Balloon Learner Centres)

- Internet safety (Essex Police)
- Healthy lifestyles (ACE – Anglian Community Enterprise)
- Ambulance (East of England Ambulance Service)
- Fire safety escape plans & smoke alarms (Essex County Fire & Rescue Service)

The new High Sheriff of Essex, Simon Hall, joined the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council at Crucial Crew and commented that he was hugely impressed by what was covered in such a short period and how impactful it is upon the children. He was also pleased to see the number of other organisations that work with us to deliver the scenario. As usual, feedback from pupils and schools has been extremely positive and it is an initiative that schools particularly value.

Cycling for Health: External funding has been secured to extend the Cycling for Health programme, which has enabled the provision of new sessions on Fridays, added to the existing Wednesday rides, through to Friday 29th September. The rides start at 10am from Gunpowder Park, Claytons Hill Car Park, Hooks Marsh Car Park or Lee Valley and are led by qualified and knowledgeable instructors. The rides take place on bridleways and walking paths so are generally traffic free and are between around 10 km and 15 km (6 to 10 miles) with a varying degree of difficulty. Bikes are available to loan and a diary of rides can be found in the Cycling for health leaflet available from Community, Health and Wellbeing.

Dementia Friends Awareness: To build upon the success of the Epping Forest Dementia Action Alliance, which has seen a range of dementia training provided by Community Services for people of all ages across the district, there will be a Dementia Friends information session for Members on Thursday 27th July 6.30pm – 7.30pm in the Council Chamber. This session, which will be approximately 45 minutes long, will be delivered by Tracy Schneider, who is an experienced trainer and is supported by the Alzheimer’s Society. It will be a very interesting session, where you will learn more about dementia, how you can help to create or support dementia friendly communities or indeed help support people who you know that are living with dementia.

Staff from Community, Health and Wellbeing, have now trained over 250 dementia friends across the district, including the fire crew at Epping Fire Station, Citizen Advice Bureau and Year 5 pupils at Upshire Primary School, and have worked in partnership with local libraries to provide public dementia friends sessions across the district during 2017. Sessions have already been held in Waltham Abbey, Loughton and Epping libraries and the remaining sessions are as follows;

- Chigwell Library, Tuesday 12th September, 2pm to 3pm.
- Debden Library, Thursday 21st September, 1.30pm to 2.30pm.
- Chipping Ongar Library, Tuesday 10th October, 10am to 11am.
- Buckhurst Hill Library, Thursday 2nd November 12.30pm
- Northweald Library, Thursday 7th December, 11am to 12noon

If Member colleagues are unable to attend the pre-Council information session, they are welcome to go along to their local library.

Summer Activities 2017: As usual, we will be providing a huge range of sporting and creative activities during the children’s summer holidays this year, for children of all ages, abilities and interests. Activities include multi-sport camps, play in the park, play in the forest, forest adventure, discover your inner artist, musical in 2 days, Go Wild:DIY grass heads, Be an Illustrator, How to Draw and lots more. We are also offering our increasingly popular Disability Inclusion Project activities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs.

Members should have received a copy of the Summer Activity Brochure 2017 via members mail, but if not, a copy can be obtained by contacting Ezra Folan on Extn. 4363.

Reality Roadshow: Our Community, Health & Wellbeing Team has, once again, completed the delivery of the Reality Roadshow programme, which is provided in every secondary school in the district, over the academic year. Over 1000 young people have participated this year, in this excellent initiative, which brings together a host of statutory and voluntary agencies, to deliver a full day of educational workshops to 14 year old pupils in the school based setting.

Every Reality Roadshow event is specifically tailored to address current and emerging issues identified by the respective school and the pupils themselves. Workshops include topics such as the consequences of crime, healthy relationships, drug awareness, internet safety, healthy lifestyle choices, sexual health, knife crime and gangs. Key messages are given in a clear and evidence based manner and serve to highlight the consequences of negative behaviours or poor choices. The programme promotes the opportunity for young people to make changes in their lives and to receive support and advice from the various agencies available locally.

Grant Aid : Since April this year, 11 groups have successfully applied and been awarded Grant Aid funding, totaling £29,667. Successful recipients include; Chigwell Tennis Club, Epping Foresters Cricket Club, Gardens of Hanbury Petanque Club, GROW Community Garden, Hastingwood Village Hall, 3rd Ongar Scouts, Roydon Tennis Club, The Roydon Society, WAY 2000 and Waltham Abbey Wood Craft Folk. The grants awarded will put to a wide range of uses including; counselling for young people, refurbishments and repairs, security fencing, polytunnels and camping equipment. If Members have any groups in their wards who need funding support for projects and activities that provide community benefit, we welcome new bids to the Grant Aid scheme.

MiLife Primary School Programme: Members will be aware of the fantastic MiLife Mental Health and Wellbeing programme that our Youth Council developed with officers and partners from the statutory and voluntary sector, and I am delighted to advise that this initiative has been a resounding success in every secondary school in the district. Not only has it had an impact on young people, but staff at local schools and other statutory and voluntary sector partners have highly praised the project, including the district's Early Help & Start Well Group (sub-group of the Health & Wellbeing Board), who identified that young children would also benefit significantly from support and early advice around mental and emotional health.

Our Community, Health & Wellbeing Team has therefore worked in collaboration with the Red Balloon Family (local Third Sector organization) to develop a new MiLife project specifically for primary schools, which will be delivered to Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children. This will include a parental awareness session, followed by presentations for every year group and then classroom based activity workshops to consolidate the key messages with pupils in smaller groups. Teacher Resource Packs have also been developed in order that school staff may further support the educational messages around emotional literacy and wellbeing. To date, pilot days have been delivered at Limes Farm Infants School and Alderton Junior School and feedback has been resoundingly positive. A further six primaries will participate in the MiLife Primary project in the Autumn.

Epping Forest Youth Council

Speed Meeting: On 3rd July, I was very pleased to be invited to the special Speed Meeting event that our Youth Councillors organised, for our Chairman, Vice Chairman of Council, portfolio holders and senior officers, in order for them to get to know us and vice versa. We were given 5 minutes to meet and question each other on a rotational basis and were all asked to complete a score sheet to identify who we felt was friendliest and best communicator. The

Youth Cllr. winners on the night were Adam Freeman and Suzannah Halcrow, and the winning adults were Cllr. Will Breare-Hall and Cllr. Amy Beales. A short video of the event was produced on the night and this is available to view via the Council's website.

Youth Market: On Saturday 8th July, the Youth Council took part in the Epping Town Young Traders Market and Festival with a tombola stall, stocked with a range of prizes donated by generous local businesses. The aim of the tombola was to raise funds for the Youth Council's chosen charity – The Children's Society, which is a charity that runs local services, helping children and young people when they are at their most vulnerable, and have nowhere else to turn. After a wonderful team effort to collect prizes, prepare the stall and then encourage people to support the tombola the Youth Councillors raised an amazing £160 for the charity.

Youth Council Priorities: Each year, the Youth Council designs and delivers a project based on the concerns and priorities of the local young people they represent. Following consultation with their peers, the current Youth Council has identified the need for a youth drug awareness project. In order to inform this project, Youth Councillors have received training from the Essex Young Peoples Drug Advisory Service - surrounding drug and alcohol abuse and also new psychoactive substances (which were previously called Legal Highs). Essex Police have provided data in respect of young peoples' drug use in the Epping Forest area and the Youth Council has produced their own survey to collect data from their schools and local area. The group are now planning a poster and social media campaign called #DUDs (Dangerous Untested Drugs). The aims of the campaign will be:

- To raise awareness of the dangers and risks of drug taking, in particular in respect of psychoactive substances
- To highlight the current amount of drug use amongst our young people
- To sign post young people to support services

Museum, Heritage and Culture

I am delighted to advise Members, that from April to end of June 2017 over 8000 people have accessed the Museum Heritage and Culture Services, in person. We have also engaged with 114,314 people online and our volunteers worked a total of 841 volunteer hours for the service during this period.

Epping Forest District Museum (EFDM) and Lowewood Museum: In June, our District Museum received its final grant payment from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for its redevelopment project and the project was officially recorded as complete. A full evaluation report was submitted to the HLF we were congratulated on the report and excellent outcomes of the redevelopment of the museum and service in general. The HLF Senior Grants Officer reported how she was 'particularly impressed that volunteers contributed input valued at £131,000 and that 40 new volunteer recruits were now engaged in helping in a wider capacity.'

No Borders: The Arts Council funded No Borders project with Chelmsford Museum and Lowewood Museum continues to progress very well in supporting commercial, fundraising and audience development. Staff across the museum partnership have received retail and buying training and work on a new shop and coffee area for Lowewood will commence in early autumn. A new guidebook for both museums has also been commissioned.

The trustees for the Culture without Borders Development Trust are currently being recruited and several very strong candidates have already been interviewed. As soon as at least one

trustee has been appointed the Charity Commission registration will take place. There will be a second phase recruitment of trustees in the autumn.

An accessibility audit for the museums has also been undertaken, and short term measures from this will be acted on through the No Borders project. The project will also be hosting focus groups during the summer for improving access and engagement with BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) individuals. We are also working with Chelmsford through the No Borders partnership, to pioneer the 'Volunteer Makers' programme to develop & broaden volunteering opportunities within the service.

Exhibitions: On Friday 23 June the Museum opened its current exhibition Paths Unseen, which runs until 20th September. This exhibition and associated project has been funded by Arts Council England, supporting and showcasing the work of performance poet Keeley Mills and illustrator Jef Winter. Through this project, Keely and Jef undertook a number of community projects throughout the district including a partnership with Epping Forest College students to create new artworks, and workshops with local writers groups, families, young people and adults. A number of workshops and activities will continue to take place throughout the district over the autumn.

The museums are currently working on two projects in preparation for commemorating 100 years of the end of WW1 in 2018, including Lowewood Museum's HLF funded project "Stephen Warner: One Man's Journey Through War" and the SpradFest project, which explores the life of unofficial war artist and former resident of the district, Walter Spradbery.

Application for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) Status: MHC was unfortunately unsuccessful with its application to become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, losing out to the National Horseracing museum and others of a similar status. The application was however highly praised by the Arts Council, who have suggested that many of the projects identified in the business plan can be funded through their other programmes.

Community Engagement: On Thursday 22 June MHC hosted its annual youth and community showcase eNgage. This year the show was held at The Spotlight Theatre in Broxbourne and had an audience of over 350 and a cast of 170. The eNgage performance encouraged several communities to come together for an evening of dance, with performers ranging from 7 to 71 years of age of mixed abilities

Wed 3rd May saw the launch of 'Lets Get Growing', a partnership project with Community Health and Wellbeing aimed at developing community engagement through a weekly gardening club at EFDM. The club, has a long term aim of nurturing a sustainable, self-directed team of volunteers to care for the garden.

At the request of SHARE Museums East, MHCs Cultural Development officers delivered a half-day Creative Engagement training course at Chelmsford museum on Wednesday 24th May. The event was heavily over-subscribed, with 30 attendees (maximum capacity) and a waiting list. The aim of the training was to provide creative engagement tools for staff working in the care industry to improve the quality of life for those living with Dementia. The training drew on experience and outcomes from the 'Transitions' projects, run by EFDC and commissioned by Arts Council England and Essex County Council between 2012 and 2014. The course received 100% positive feedback from participants with repeated requests for further training of this kind.

Schools Engagement Programme: Over the last few months, a programme of history workshops using objects from the museum have been delivered to schools around the district and beyond and pupils from Year 6 at Leverton School in Waltham Abbey, additionally visited the Museum to explore the galleries. The museum education officer also supported the delivery of a new Gifted and Talented History Day for pupils in the District's Primary schools, in partnership with King Harold Academy. For the very young ones, the museum held its first workshop for nursery aged pupils, who were invited to explore an old fashioned washday through real historical objects, nursery rhymes and craft.

A new partnership project with Lea Valley Parks is also under development that will enable pupils to explore the remains of the medieval Abbey in the Abbey Gardens with Lea Valley Parks staff, then visit EFDM to investigate historical objects such as the Waltham Abbey Bible, and archaeological finds from the site itself.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date 27 July 2017

Subject: Planning & Governance Portfolio Holder

Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip

Recommending:

That the report of the Planning & Governance Portfolio Holder be noted.

1. Development Management

Building Control

Building Control has been much in the news over recent months. The tragic loss of life at Grenfell Tower has focussed attention on all aspects of the construction industry, including the role of Building Control in ensuring safe buildings in which people live, work and relax. Understandably in the immediate aftermath emotions run high and the quest for immediate answers although understandable, cannot always be satisfied. Of course, any applicable lessons learned or changes to standards as a result of the forthcoming public inquiry will be acted upon; in the meantime the in house team continues to advise internal and external clients in the timely and professional manner which has led to their recent successes.

At the Local Authority Building Control regional awards, held at Kings' College, Cambridge on 30th June 2017, the team and partners with whom they work were shortlisted finalists in multiple categories, including Best Individual Builder or traditional craftsman, (Paul Blatch), Best Partnership with a local authority building control team, and Best Inclusive Building – both involving Weston Homes. The Inclusive Building is the impressive Taylor Centre at St Clare's Hospice. To quote from the nomination, 'Epping Forest District Council was the chosen Building Control Body and the close working relationship we have with their team through our partnership working, was invaluable in achieving our targets and goals.' The winning entry for best individual dwelling was won by 'Hanlin', Albion Hill, Loughton and the Building Control Manager, Jeff Dixon was proud to be called upon to collect the award.

This excellent team continues to generate increased income of £58,495 (budget £44,210) for April 2017 and £52,420 (Budget £37,110) for May 2017. This is an excess over budget of nearly £30,000.

This is very encouraging for Building Control as it demonstrates the value of the work sought through partnership working – including with the private sector.

It is important to acknowledge achievement and in the current climate of concern to reassure the public as to the positive contribution a properly resourced and qualified team can make to the safety and sustainability of buildings in our District and beyond.

Development Control

Income for April 2017 (Budget £74,560) was £75,267 which was on budget for the month. However, May saw an inevitable dip with income of £47,593 (Budget £78,790).

Whilst DC income has been rising, the budget targets have also risen from an annual target set in April 2015 of £595,000 to an increased budget target set in January 2017 of £970,000. Normally increases in income are difficult to exceed in following years. However, DC have been able to do this and are confident that overall they will be able to meet the revised budget target of £970,000.

Experience in both 2015/16 and 2016/17 showed that income exceeded £90,000 in three separate months, which illustrates how DC income fluctuates.

In addition, the levels of Pre-Application Advice Income budgeted level of £8,740 per month has been exceeded by our monthly actual average of £9,082.

2. PR and Information

Viral Social Media Video

A misleading social media video posted over a weekend at the beginning of June was taken down after interventions by the Council's PR and Communities teams. The video purporting to show the destruction of a council house by a new tenant was posted by a neighbour. It contained a strong and incorrect commentary suggesting the new tenant was foreign and wrecking the interior of the house. The video quickly went viral with 700,000 views and almost 500 comments, many of which carried potentially racist overtones.

The video was picked up over the weekend by the Council's out of hours social media monitoring team coordinated by PR. It also came to the attention of several Waltham Abbey councillors.

Although concerned about the apparent destruction of a council house, the social media team had perhaps greater concerns around peace and social stability in the area of the house.

However, timely communication with officers in the Communities Directorate established that the property was in fact empty, the previous tenant having recently passed away. The work assumed to be destruction in the video was in fact the clearance of old fixtures and fittings as a precursor to refurbishment and re-letting to a family on the Council's waiting list.

The Council took a multi-faceted approach to correcting the misinformation and reassuring the local community. The Council's PR team contacted the author of the video, following which the video was taken off-line. The Council posted correction comments on the author's timeline and across our own social media outlets. The message was reinforced with traditional media releases carried by the local press and in online newspaper coverage.

This episode is a graphic demonstration of the rapidly changing media environment. Citizen journalism carries hidden dangers, not just for organisations such as the Council but also for the authors of such content who may not appreciate the potential legal and social consequences when a small incident goes viral. In addition to reassuring local residents that there was no cause for alarm, the Housing Portfolio Holder also issued advice through the PR team on the danger of posting online content without fact checking first.

The incident also demonstrated the good work of the Council's staff out of hours, whose efforts by their nature usually go unnoticed.

3. General and County Council Elections – 2017

Electoral Services Staff, together with support from staff from Democratic Services, Public Relations and from staff across the wider Council, successfully delivered two sets of Elections during May and June.

The calling of a general election, so close to scheduled elections in May was a challenge made more difficult by the overlapping of the election organisational processes. In May we opened 74 polling stations across the district, a total of 486 different jobs were undertaken, in June, for the General Election, Epping Forest Constituency used 45 stations and due to the higher level of turnout used a total of 477 different jobs. These range from the Returning Officer to those delivering poll cards.

Debden Park provided facilities for the Count Centre and in June the Count was completed at 2.00 am, much earlier than 2015.

As is the usual practice, the Returning Officer is undertaking a review of both sets of Elections. A report will be made to the Governance Select Committee in the autumn. Members will be consulted during the next few weeks. However, if members have observations on potential improvements or how they saw the organisation of the elections or polling stations, they can email Simon Hill (shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk).

4. Update on the Local Plan

- a. Since my last report to Council on 25 April 2017, the Cabinet considered a report on 15 June 2017 on the implementation of the Local Plan which agreed to establish the appropriate process and arrangements and put in place the necessary resources, agree the approach to the production of Strategic Masterplans and the introduction of Planning Performance Agreements. As part of this work a review of the skills within the Council is underway in order to identify the resources and skills required to take this work forward to deliver the Local Plan. This work is critical for the Council as it must be able to demonstrate at public examination how the proposals and site allocations will be delivered so that the local plan can be found sound at examination.
- b. A report to Cabinet on 11 July 2017 set out the detailed findings of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan Consultation that took place between the 31 October 2016 and 12 December 2016. The Council received 3,387 responses from 3,072 respondents. A summary of the key issues raised, together with the Council's response to these issues was provided and the Consultation Report from Remarkable which provides both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the feedback received to the consultation.
- c. Work is progressing to inform and support the Pre-Submission Publication Plan. The key workstreams are:
 - Site selection – work has commenced on the assessment of approximately 169 sites comprising a mix of new or amended residential/traveller sites and employment sites. The methodology for the process has been published on the Council's website.
 - Transport modelling
 - Open Space, Playing Pitch and Indoor Sports Facilities Studies
 - Further work on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- Local plan viability work
 - Joint work to update the employment need within the Functional Economic Market Area and the District to inform the work on site selection
 - Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment
- d. The key issues in managing the programme relate to resources, the ability of external organisations, such as Essex County Council, in providing timely inputs into plan preparation (largely outside our control) and the interconnectivity of the various workstreams. The importance of maintaining a full team of appropriately skilled and effective officers and consultants cannot be underestimated and there have been resource concerns with staff leaving/going on maternity leave. In addition, the avoidance of diversion of resource to other tasks is a key concern yet matters such as neighbourhood plan advice, development monitoring and assistance do need to be provided. Whilst progressing the Local Plan, officers are also working to progress the delivery of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and to take forward the Developer Forum and other work as reported to the Cabinet on 15 June 2017.

5. Housing White Paper

The Government published the Housing White Paper '*Fixing Our Broken Housing Market*' on 7 February 2017. This sets out a broad range of reforms that Government plans to introduce to help reform the housing market and increase the supply of new homes. One of the proposals set out in the White Paper was to introduce a standardised methodology for the calculation of objectively assessed housing – the Secretary of State confirmed on 4 July 2017 that the Government will launch a consultation this month on a new way for councils to assess their local housing requirements to ensure transparency and consistency. He also announced that plans will need to be reviewed at least every 5 years.

6. Garden Town Funding

The Council was successful (together with East Herts and Harlow Councils) in securing initial Garden Towns funding of £675,000 from DCLG for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town to support the delivery of strategic sites in and around Harlow for 2016/17. A further application has been made to secure funding for 2017/18 and a decision is awaited. Work has been commissioned to prioritise the establishment of interim governance arrangements, prepare a project programme (including a proposed structure of the team), establish a Quality Review Panel and undertake work on the proposed sustainable transport corridor. Consultants have been appointed to prepare a spatial vision and design charter for the Garden Town.

Interim Governance arrangements are being proposed and will be considered by the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board at its next meeting on 31 July 2017. The paper includes a proposal to extend the existing EFDC Local Plan Developer Forum to encompass all the sites in and around Harlow and to operate as a Garden Town Developer Forum. This will provide a basis for the long term planning and implementation of sites identified for allocation in the Local Plan and provides a basis for the coordination and management of Strategic Masterplans.

7. Community Housing Fund

EFDC has received funding from DCLG under the Community Housing Fund to promote self-build and community led housing schemes. The Council has agreed to work with Uttlesford, Harlow and East Herts Districts on a joint project and reached agreement that the resources allocated to each individual Council will be pooled into a joint fund. This amounts

to a total of £102,672. Work has now been commissioned to undertake a research project looking at all aspects of community led housing including self-build and Community Land Trusts. This project will identify existing and new participants for these models of housing delivery. The research will include a series of events and provide information to inform Councillors, Parish Councillors, Neighbourhood Plan groups, self-builders and local residents, about the objectives, benefits and potential, community led housing schemes can bring to communities and local authorities.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Safer, Greener & Transport

Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Waller

Recommending:

That the report of the Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder be noted.

Community Safety

Operational Demand

The Community Safety Team is currently experiencing a sustained and significant level of demand on its resources to respond to a wide range of incidents across the district, including several very serious events.

Limes Farm

Members may be aware of the recent stabbing at Limes Farm, which was unfortunately carried out in front of several local residents and their young children. Community Safety have therefore been on site at Limes Farm since the incident, working with housing staff and other agencies to help reassure residents and give them the opportunity to talk to officers. The team also identified a counsellor to work with some of the young children who witnessed the crime and experienced trauma as a result. Accommodation was made available at the Limes Centre to allow this valuable work to be carried out.

An urgent interim injunction excluding a male from his property at Limes Farm has also been granted by the court, in order to protect residents of Council properties from continual harassment, threats and abuse. A full hearing is due to follow. Linked to this, Community Safety have issued four Community Protection warning letters to perpetrators associated with the ringleader.

Anti-Social Behaviour

ASB investigations are in progress in relation to a prolific offender who is currently victimising residents in Epping. In the last few weeks, our investigators secured an interim injunction against the offender, who has a high propensity for violence, through personally serving court papers on him where he lives. This was followed up with an urgent injunction to protect one of our tenants, which was secured jointly by Housing, Community Safety and Legal. Our ASB team are now working with the Community Policing Team on a joint criminal investigation into his activity. The Council's CCTV footage was used in this case, as it provided excellent imagery of the assault on one of our tenants who is a vulnerable victim with learning difficulties. A full county court hearing took place on 10 July and I am pleased to report that the Judge granted a full injunction under Anti-Social Behaviour legislation with additional conditions to exclude the man from his home and immediate locality with a power

of arrest. This has sent a clear message to our tenants and the public that the Council will take positive action through the courts when justified.

A further and second injunction with power of arrest has been granted against a male who has previously been, and is now again, victimising his elderly and infirm neighbour in Waltham Abbey. This is a long running, time consuming and complex investigation which has required careful multi-agency collaboration.

Members may also be aware that one of the Community Safety Team investigators, whilst recovering a council property which was being used as a crack house was required to assist a police officer who was working with him. The officers had evicted two males trespassing on the property when both were found to be wanted persons. The lone police officer attempted to arrest one of the males, but the other ran away from the scene. However, the arrest was not straightforward, as the individual was high on drugs and violently resisted arrest. The officer therefore called on our investigator to lend assistance in physically restraining the male. As a result, our officer sustained cuts and grazes as well as ripped clothing, and the offender's blood contaminated his clothing and footwear. The offender was later found to have hepatitis C and our officer was then required to have a blood test which thankfully proved negative. The offender has been charged with assaulting our officer, criminal damage and resisting arrest and will appear at court once forensic tests are returned on suspected class A drugs found on him. I think this demonstrates the potential hazards and risks our frontline staff experience on a daily basis.

Modern Slavery

Community Safety have recently worked with the Council's Private Sector Housing team and Loughton Community Policing Team following intelligence that was shared by residents, regarding concerns about the activity of Eastern European occupants of a house in Buckhurst Hill. Police obtained a search warrant for the property and, together with an officer from Community Safety, carried out a raid on the premises. Three persons of Romanian nationality were arrested for offences of people trafficking, facilitation and modern slavery. Working with Private Sector Housing, the owner of the property has been located, informed of the situation and was horrified at the way that their property had been used. Evictions of the remaining occupants are likely to follow.

Secured by Design

I would like to draw Members' attention to the Police Secured by Design home website, where there is an excellent article showcasing the work of our Community Safety Team, in conjunction with the police, to design out crime on new building projects. This has been highlighted as best practice nationally and will also feature in a film produced by ITN at the forthcoming Association for Public Service Excellence conference in September. The film includes footage of Paul Gardener working with Heather Gurden, who is the Strategic Designing out Crime Officer at Essex Police, and an interview with Alan Hall, Director of Communities, conducted in Epping High Street.

CCTV Footage requested for Insurance Claims

There has been a steady increase in calls for CCTV footage to assist insurance claims for vehicle collisions and fail to stop cases, which is supporting the Council's income generation. Police based at Loughton station have also recently started using the Loughton CCTV system to provide prosecution evidence for motoring offences in the area. To date, this has resulted in at least three separate charges.

Working with partners

We are currently supporting Genesis Housing Association with CCTV coverage in relation to ASB by providing and managing one of our mobile CCTV systems on their behalf. Since its installation, the CCTV has captured a significant number of images of youths causing anti-social behaviour, which Genesis Housing can now address. This arrangement has been very successful for the housing association and has enabled the Council to secure a small amount of revenue income. We hope to expand this service in the future.

CCTV

Images from high resolution CCTV covering one of the Council's housing properties in Epping has enabled the Council to secure a court injunction on a male who let his dog attack another dog owned by a council tenant, whom he then assaulted.

The CCTV in Epping High Street captured individuals conducting a transaction involving a £5,000 Rolex. This turned out to be a distraction theft, and vehicle registration and images of the suspects were provided to the police, resulting in arrests made shortly afterwards in the Midlands area, where the goods were also recovered.

Other notable incidents captured on the Council's CCTV:

- An assault at North Weald shops where a male was kicked to the ground.
- Suspected drug dealing at Limes Farm.
- Criminal damage to a business premises in North Weald.
- Male captured on CCTV trying to have indecent images of children developed. An arrest was later made, in conjunction with Met officers. (Loughton)
- CCTV recorded the injury of a child who was impaled on a shrub stem at Birch View, Epping, resulting in the need for hospital treatment. An EFDC Health and Safety Officer investigated and no claim against the Council has been made as yet. CCTV shows the child was skylarking and tripped over, landing on the sharp shrub.

Countrycare

Since the last report, Countrycare has held some varied volunteer project days on thirteen different sites in the District. Bobbingworth saw more trees being planted to gap up a hedge where the hunt was entering the site, and our team also worked on a hedge that was overrun with bramble, and mulched the trees. Reserve furniture, benches and interpretation boards have been given a varnish at Roughtallys Wood and Bobbingworth. We teamed up with Essex Wildlife Trust to mow and rake Hawkesmere Springs. Other sites worked on include Abbots Wood in Waltham Abbey, Springs Pond Wood, Ongar Orchard and Norton Heath.

The Nazeing Triangle Project continues, and a day was spent with volunteers planting coir matting with pond plants at the edge of the pond. A handrail was put on one side of the boardwalk and a disabled access path was constructed to access the dipping platform. All staff went to propagate phragmites (large perennial grasses found in wetlands) from Bobbingworth, to be planted in the pond at Nazeing.

On Bobbingworth Nature Reserve, Countrycare held a bio-blitz on 3 July, but unfortunately there was not enough time in a day and an evening to blitz the whole site. The unfinished results are 64 species of plant (not including the trees) and grasses, over 40 species of moths, four species of bee, several grasshoppers, a strong presence of bats, mainly Soprano and Common Pipistrelle, and a good population of slowworms.

Countrysidecare has published three new walks leaflets: 'Roydon', 'Epping and Theydon' and 'Moreton-Magdalen Laver'. They are available to download on the Countrysidecare section of EFDC website and as hard copies in EFDC reception.

Butterflies at Church Lane LNR and Bobbingworth are being monitored as part of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. A first for Church Lane occurred recently when a Marbled White was found for the first time on the site.

Five events have been held so far this summer. Hedgehog Day, held at Greenacres Burial Park, and with their help, was enjoyed by 25 children. The Woodford Brownies spent an evening bug hunting and pond dipping after making bumblebee homes. The Ongar Rainbows played bug games, made butterfly feeders and went bug hunting on Bobbingworth Nature Reserve. Twenty five students from Chigwell School spent a day in Chigwell Row Wood helping to rake the glades, make bird boxes and survey the veteran trees. A lifewalk that took place in Ongar was attended by 30 adults.

Trees and landscape

Work has continued to build a partnership comprising organisations committed to delivering a greener future for the district; the Tree Council, which established the tree warden scheme, is the latest to seek to join us. I was pleased to attend the annual meeting in Theydon Bois of Green Arc, which has since 2004 sought to enhance and expand opportunities for the public to access and enjoy green infrastructure in the area from the northern and eastern suburbs of London, across Essex and into Hertfordshire. A Charter for Trees, People and the Natural Environment is in preparation, and I hope to present this for approval to Cabinet shortly.

Members may be aware that Chris Neilan has developed a methodology, CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees), which enables a financial value to be attached to trees, providing a means of managing them as public assets. It is designed not only to be a strategic tool and an aid to decision making in relation to the tree stock as a whole, but also to be applicable to individual trees so that the value of a single tree, which may for instance be under threat, can be expressed in monetary terms. Forest Research, the research arm of the Forestry Commission, have completed the draft of the paper on CAVAT, of which Chris Neilan is co-author, and this will now be undergoing peer review prior to publication later in 2017.

Conservation

The team comprises two full time positions: both Conservation Officers deal with developments within conservation areas and works affecting listed buildings and their settings, as well as locally listed buildings. The Senior Conservation Officer has returned to working full time since completing a part-time Postgraduate Certificate in Historic Conservation over a period of nine months.

Since the start of the year, on average, the team have dealt with between 40 and 50 development control consultations per month (along with other enquires from both colleagues and members of the public more difficult to quantify), in addition to pre-application submissions and a number of enforcement cases relating to conservation areas and listed buildings on which advice is given.

Both officers also work on guidance documents and character appraisals when time allows. Currently the Senior Conservation Officer is working on the new Buckhurst Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal for one afternoon per week. When workload allows, the Conservation Officer is working on updating the Council's Traditional Shopfront Guidance

and a 'factsheet' for new listed building owners. The Senior Conservation Officer provides input to the Local Plan as and when required, and this work is expected to increase as further site selection work is carried out.

Parking

Off Street enforcement

As I have reported previously, mobilisation of the NSL Limited contract for enforcement and associated activities in Council car parks was successful and the new service commenced from Saturday 1 April 2017. All the data relating to back office operations has been successfully migrated from NEPP to EFDC. Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) have been out issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to contravening motorists, and enforcement at weekends has been improved. This has helped with the through flow in car parks which will, I am sure, benefit the town centres.

Loughton Broadway Parking Review

Traffic Regulation Orders for the first phase of the review comprising: Oakwood Hill Road, Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate, Honeycroft, Lenthall Road, Rectory Lane, Chigwell Lane, Colson Road and Torrington Drive have been formally published and adopted. Enforcement at these sites will commence next month. Following that, work on the second phase of the scheme encompassing the wider area will commence.

North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)

Last time I reported that the following five schemes were approved at the meeting of the Joint Committee of the NEPP on 30 March: Abridge Road, Theydon Bois, Stradbroke Grove/The Meadway, Buckhurst Hill, Tidys Lane, Epping, Stonnards Hill, Epping and Milton Street Waltham Abbey. Officers will now carry out detailed site surveys and prepare preliminary designs which will then be consulted upon. Because the process involves statutory requirements including advertising and consultation, and there are also resource pressures as schemes have to be fully funded by NEPP, implementation could take up to 18 months.

Car Parking Strategy update

Work at Traps Hill car park has been completed, and it now has new LED lighting and CCTV systems. Basons Lane and The Pleasance have already had new CCTV installed, and in Queens Road Lower Car Park in Buckhurst Hill the CCTV has been upgraded. The next three car parks to be upgraded are: Quaker Lane, Cornmill and Darby Drive in Waltham Abbey.

Traffic Regulation Orders will be published shortly for the new car parks, one in Burton Road and two on the Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate. The access road along the Burton Road Car Park will be converted to pay and display and permits. This will improve road safety and create more parking for shoppers and visitors to The Broadway.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Technology and Support Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Lion

Recommending:

That the report of the Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted

Support Services

Apprentice Recruitment

The new cohort of apprentices is currently being recruited to start in September 2017 and consists of 9 Business Administration and 1 Construction apprentice. Members may have seen the scheme advertised in the Epping Forest Guardian and there is a social media campaign which will run for 3 weeks. The campaign was designed by Becky Linford, current 'Apprentice of the Year' who will also be involved in mentoring the new cohort.

As part of this scheme Human Resources is working in partnership with Essex County Council NEET Team (Not in Employment, Education or Training Team) to shortlist CV's for this programme, which we have done for the previous 2 cohorts.

The Essex NEET Team gives the Council access to data on all the Young People in the district and what they are planning to do after leaving school i.e. college, employment, and apprenticeships. The Essex NEET Team communicate and market the Council's apprenticeship programme to young people and schools, this is in addition to our own advertising and we have found that social media has been very successful.

The Apprenticeship Programme is also being run in partnership with the Council's preferred Housing Associations, who fund 2 of the 10 places. As part of the recruitment process all suitable applicants will be invited to a week-long in-house course where they will have the opportunity to learn new skills such as team working, communication, budgeting and interview skills.

Similar to the previous 2 cohorts, successful apprentices will move around the organisation 4 times in the 2 years, spending 6 months at a time in different work placements and have the opportunity to complete a Level 2 apprenticeship framework qualification, whilst receiving monthly mentoring from the Council's internal coaches.

I am delighted to report that in total 12 apprentices from the first 2 cohorts remain employed in permanent roles across the Council; they continue to develop and are involved in further qualifications and training.

Sickness Absence

I am pleased to inform Members that the sickness absence outturn figure for the Council has reduced from an average of 7.99 days per employee in 2015/16 to an average of 6.71 days

in 2016/17. The Council will also be below the target set for last year which was an average of 7.5 days per employee.

Automated notifications are sent to Managers on a weekly basis regarding their employees who exceed the Council's limits (of 8 days and/or 5 occasions or more). Systems are in place to ensure that sickness absence is managed in a timely and appropriate way.

i-Trent Employee Self Service System

From December 2016, the Council's employees have been paid through the new i-Trent Human Resources and Payroll system. The most recent phase of the rollout of i-Trent gave employees access to the Employee Self-Service (ESS) module from late-May 2017 and all employees can now access, update and view their own personnel, employment and pay records electronically. Consequently, as of the July 2017 pay run, employees will no longer receive a paper payslip and can download or print their payslips through the ESS module.

The ESS facility will be switched on for the payment of member's allowances within the next few months and will be highlighted by an item in the Council Bulletin shortly. Individual login details will be issued to each member and a demonstration of the ESS system will be held before the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 31 October 2017, although officers of Human Resources will be available in the meantime to resolve difficulties with the use of the ESS system. Members will continue to receive a paper payslip for the next two quarterly pay runs (July and October 2017) and, once they are confident on how to access and view payslips, the switch to electronic delivery will be made.

Facilities

The team are busy scheduling works arising in year 1 of the 5 year planned maintenance programme 2017-2022 for operational and commercial properties, such as the Civic Offices, Depots, North Weald Airfield, shop units, the Limes Centre and many more buildings across the district.

Specifications are being drawn up in order to progress projects going forward. At North Weald Airfield the dilapidated single glazed timber windows, doors and roof lights to the gatehouse are to be replaced with new thermally efficient double glazed aluminum units and the control tower is to be redecorated externally.

Housing works unit painters have been assigned as 'in-house' contractors to complete some redecoration works internally and externally at Loughton Broadway, North Weald Airfield, Museum and the Limes Centre.

Planning permission has now been granted to install new security fencing around the perimeter of Townmead depot to prevent access by unauthorised persons. The surveying team is now seeking quotations for the works.

A planning application is also being drawn up for essential maintenance works to the roof of the listed museum building. When the museum was refurbished it was identified that there was no waterproof membrane below the roofing tiles, so any slippage of a tile could allow water directly into the property and the lead flashings were splitting and are generally life expired. It is proposed to scaffold the premises for safe working at height and then carefully strip off the tiles, installing a breathable waterproof underlay membrane on new battens and then relay the tiles including replacing all broken ones. Lead flashings and abutments are to be renewed and the opportunity is to be taken to provide insulation to roof spaces where possible. Whilst scaffolding is in place, it will also be used to access and overhaul all the chimney stacks.

With the accommodation review ongoing, a careful assessment of all the planned maintenance works proposed for the Civic Offices has now been completed. Much of the services infrastructure around the site is close to life expiry, being 30 years old and careful consideration has been given to what projects can be put on hold in the short term until the review is complete. Quite a few schemes have been held back however, the risks and consequences of this have been mitigated in the short term by increasing maintenance/inspection regimes. At this stage, only projects with a health and safety impact or where there would be a high effect on business continuity will be proceeding.

Technology

The Service Desk team has now filled 2 of its 3 vacant posts and they will be advertising the third post externally shortly. Similarly the newly created Mobile Working and Document Management posts have also been filled within existing budgets. The staff will commence their roles at various dates over the summer and it is pleasing to note the quality of applicants attracted to join ICT from other areas within the Council.

The Service Desk team has been implementing the rollout of new 'thin client' terminals to replace obsolete devices, this includes redundant PCs that have been converted into terminals at the end of their useful lives, saving the Council around £100 per device. The redundant Canon printers have now been returned and secure destruction of their hard drives has been carried out.

Work is now in progress on the creation of the 2018-2023 ICT Strategy and the Business Analysts are engaging with Assistant Directors to ascertain their requirements and aspirations. They plan to bring the draft strategy to Resources Select Committee in the Autumn, ahead of the strategy going to Cabinet in November. Their resources are currently focussing on identifying and planning delivery of tasks that need to be complete to ensure that any changes to working patterns and accommodation can be delivered from an ICT perspective.

The Gazetteer team has recently acquired a Gold status rating, which is the highest rating receiving 99.5% and 99.8% in accuracy from the Geoplace National Hub for the Councils Local Land and Property Gazetteer for the first time. This is despite the team being below strength for almost a year.

Following a recruitment exercise bringing the Gazetteer team back up to full strength, a project to replace our current Gazetteer software is underway, which once complete will enable them to start connecting the Gazetteer to Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) and Electoral Roll systems. This work is crucial for the Corporate Transformation project, as front of house staff answering customer queries will need access to information across the Council, all linked together by the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) managed by the Gazetteer.

Furthermore, the Gazetteer team will be taking over responsibility for the Street Naming and Numbering process. This will assist to deliver a cohesive, accurate and efficient process to developers/householders whilst ensuring that legislation and planning covenants are respected throughout.

The Gazetteer team have been working with a new broadband availability dataset and Performance Management systems, making that data available within their mapping solution. They are working with Forward Planning on a mobile data project, where they will

be using the Gazetteer services to collect data and photographs during a number of site visits directly into their mapping system for later reporting and analysis.

Superfast Broadband High Speed Internet

Broadband Delivery

The Rural Challenge Project continues to deliver ultrafast fibre broadband capability to rural houses and business premises throughout the north-east of the district. At the end of June over 3,200 premises had been passed by the network with more than 2,200 now active and able to access the world-class speeds provided by the broadband infrastructure. The network build to date represents in excess of 210 kilometers of fibre infrastructure. It is hoped that building of the final 2 cabinet areas in Hastingwood/North Weald and Ongar will commence in early summer 2017 with completion of the full programme remaining on track for the end of the 2017.

Smart Places

Further work and discussions with partners have been undertaken in order to progress the Smart Places programme of projects that will look to exploit the advanced broadband infrastructure that will be present in the district upon completion of the Rural Challenge Project and the associated Superfast Essex broadband programme. A Digital Strategy, co-funded by the Council, neighbouring local authorities, partners, key local public and private sector organisations is being explored. It is planned that this document would not only be a snapshot of the infrastructure already in place in the district and surrounding areas, but would act as a summary of the current and future strategic co-ordinated needs of the organisations involved as well as the needs of key private sector users, developers and providers. At the meeting on the 15 June, Cabinet endorsed the cross-border, cross-sector collaborative approach and the use of the External Partnership Fund up to maximum of £25,000 to make an additional contribution from the Council towards commissioning this strategy as determined by the level of funding secured from partners. At the same meeting, Cabinet also agreed to the allocation of up to £45,000 from the Epping Forest Economic Opportunities Fund towards the examination of options for the provision of free Town Centre Wi-Fi in some or all of the district's Town Centres.

Portfolio Changes

At the start of the new Council year May 2017 Internal Audit, Corporate Fraud and Legal have been added to my portfolio.

Internal Audit and the Corporate Fraud Team

April 2017 saw the successful creation of the Internal Audit shared service between the host authority Broxbourne, Epping and Harlow Councils.

The team consisting of the Chief Internal Auditor, 3 Senior Auditors and 3 Auditors work across all 3 Councils. This has benefitted all Councils through cost savings and sharing best practice, as well as increasing the resilience of the service. In addition the success of the Internal Audit shared service is paving the way to identify other shared service opportunities.

The Corporate Fraud Team, in collaboration with Internal Audit, has revamped the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, bringing together a number of fraud related documents including the Council's Anti-Money Laundering Policy, Bribery Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

The fundamental messages contained within the Strategy are the Council will:

- Maintain a culture that will not tolerate fraud or corruption.
- Ensure staff and Members demonstrate the highest standards of honesty and integrity at all times.
- Commit to an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy that covers the best practice principles of acknowledging and understanding fraud risks, by preventing and deterring fraud and being stronger in pursuing fraud.
- Work in partnership both locally and nationally to tackle fraud and corruption.

The Audit and Governance Committee has considered the strategy and when approved by Council it will be disseminated to staff and Members.

The Corporate Fraud Team continues to go from strength to strength and its successes for 2016/17 included 28 Right to Buy (RTB) applications being stopped and/or withdrawn as a result of investigation team involvement, stopping approximately £2.1 million of potential RTB discount. Other investigations into suspected housing frauds have resulted in the recovery of 16 Council properties which can be re-let to priority cases on the waiting list saving approximately £290,000.

We currently have 2 prosecutions going through the courts which are subject to Proceeds of Crime action. Both cases involve various aspects of Social Housing Fraud and the defendants in both cases currently are subject to restraint orders whereby assets held (such as money, property etc.) cannot be accessed or disposed of without permission of the Court. The cases are due to go to trial in August and October respectively and if convicted, we will be requesting that the Courts grant the Council either confiscation and / or compensation as per The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

We are also currently undertaking a Proceeds of Crime action on behalf of Broxbourne Council (regarding a planning enforcement matter). This is being conducted under the provisions of a Memorandum of Understanding between EFDC and Broxbourne and if successful, EFDC will receive a percentage of whatever monetary award is made by the Court. The next hearing for this matter is in August.

Legal

Langston Road Shopping Park

With the opening date fast approaching, Legal is in the process of receiving for signing and sealing the Agreement for Lease for the Units. Third party notices are also being prepared and signed on behalf of the Council.

House Build Project

In relation to Phase 3 of Council houses being built on surplus land/garages 7 separate contracts were let. Legal have signed/sealed and exchanged 4 of these and are waiting on the Consultant Pellings to produce the final 3 contracts to be signed and sealed.

Arboricultural Maintenance Contract

We are currently in the process of preparing the tendering documents for Ground Maintenance 'tree pruning', which is to be let under a Procurement exercise for 5 +2 years. Brand new Conditions of Contract have been prepared for the new Contract as the current Agreement used is no longer fit for purpose.

Prosecution

At Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 6 July 2017 Mr. Paul Hayden pleaded guilty to cutting down 2 Oak trees and 2 Hawthorn trees and willfully damaging another Hawthorn which were protected by a woodland Tree Preservation Order and are in a Conservation area.

Mr. Hayden had bought the land in late 2006, but as he had occupied it for about 26 years he told his solicitor not to carry out the usual conveyancing searches, which would have revealed that the trees were protected. The trees were cut down to clear a horse ride for his daughter and to avoid horses eating the acorns which he said were poisonous to them.

The Magistrates considered his actions reckless but not for monetary gain. Mr. Hayden's guilty plea was also taken into account and he was fined £400 for each of the trees cut down and £250 for the damaged Hawthorn. Mr. Hayden was ordered to pay the Council's prosecution costs of £1,309 and a Victim Surcharge of £40 making a total of £3,199 Mr. Hayden said: 'He may have to sell the land to pay it'. Mr. Hayden will also have to plant replacement trees.

Scanning of Council Records

The scanning project of the Council's land ownership records and other legal documents are still ongoing and good progress has been made on this. All of the deeds some 919 packets containing multiple documents have been scanned and are available to Legal and Estates Officers.

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 27 July 2017

Subject: Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny

Chairman: Councillor M Sartin



Recommendation:

That the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Select Committees during the past municipal year (2016/17) as detailed in the annual report be noted.

Report:

1. This report was produced in accordance with Article 6, Overview and Scrutiny Rule 37 of the Constitution that requires an annual report to be submitted to the Council at the start of each year.
2. This is the twelfth annual report under the scrutiny regime instituted by the Council in April 2005, incorporating four Select Committees.

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Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2016-2017



Epping Forest District Council



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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT: MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/2017

Introduction and Welcome from the Chairman

Welcome to the twelfth annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Structure of Epping Forest District Council and my first year as the Chairman.

This was the second year of our new O&S set up using Select Committees to break down our work by Directorate. This year we established four Select Committees aligned with the new Directorate structure that the Council had recently put in place.

As always, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the new Select Committees were charged with reviewing Cabinet decisions, the Corporate Strategy, the Council's financial performance and also scrutinising the performance of the public bodies active in the District by inviting reports and presentations from them.

At the beginning of the 2016/17 municipal year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to the setting up of four Select Committees for the year; one Task and Finish Panels was commissioned.

During the year we received presentations from outside bodies including the Superintendent of Epping Forest, Transport for London, and Epping Forest College.

My thanks go to the Chairmen and members of the four new Select Committees; also, my special thanks go to my Vice-Chairman, Councillor L Girling for all his help and support through the year.

And of course, I would like to thank all the officers that have worked so hard to keep the Committee members informed and supplied with the background information that they needed to carry out their investigations.

Cllr Mary Sartin

Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

What is Scrutiny?

- Scrutiny in local government is the mechanism by which public accountability is exercised.
- The purpose of scrutiny in practice is to examine, question and evaluate in order to achieve improvement.
- The value of scrutiny is in the use of research and questioning techniques to make recommendations based on evidence.
- Scrutiny enables issues of public concerns to be examined.
- At the heart of all the work is consideration of what impact the Cabinet's plans will have on the local community.
- However, the overview and scrutiny function is not meant to be confrontational or seen as deliberately set up to form an opposition to the Cabinet. Rather the two aspects should be regarded as 'different sides of the same coin'. The two should complement each other and work in tandem to contribute to the development of the authority.

Alongside its role to challenge, the scrutiny function has also continued to engage positively with the Cabinet and there continues to be cross party co-operation between members on all panels.

Scrutiny has continued to provide valuable contributions to the Council and the Cabinet remained receptive to ideas put forward by Scrutiny throughout the year.

The rules of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also allow members of the public to have the opportunity to address the Committee on any agenda item.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee coordinated with the Cabinet and pre scrutinised their Key Decision list (their forward plan) on a meeting by meeting basis. This acted as a troubleshooting exercise, unearthing problems before they arose. It also gave the Cabinet a chance to ask Overview and Scrutiny to look at any items of work that they thought needed either scrutiny or pre-scrutiny.

The Committee also engaged with external bodies in order to scrutinise parts of their work that encroached on the District and its people. They also received stand alone reports from officers and reports from the Select Committees on the work they carried out during the year.

Select Committees

A lead Officer was appointed to each Select Committee to facilitate its process. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the terms of reference for each of the Committees on the basis of a rolling programme to consider ongoing and cyclical issues. Four Select Committees were established, dealing with:

- i. Communities,
- ii. Governance,
- iii. Neighbourhoods, and
- iv. Resources.

The Select Committees reported regularly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with the work they were carrying out.

Task and Finish Panels

The Task and Finish reviews are restricted to dealing with activities which are issue based, time limited, non-cyclical and with clearly defined objectives on which they would report, once completed, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

One Task and Finish Panels was established at the end of this year, to review the Council's Transformation Programme and to establish what the Resources Select would need to scrutinise in the next few years.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor M Sartin (Chairman)
Councillor L Girling (Vice Chairman)
Councillors N Avey, N Bedford, R Brookes, D Dorrell, S Kane, Y Knight, A Mitchell,
S Murray, S Neville, A Patel, B Rolfe, G Shiell, D Stallan, B Surtees and D Wixley

The Lead Officer was Derek Macnab, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods.

Terms of Reference

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's main functions are to monitor and scrutinise the work of the executive and its forward plan, external bodies linked to the District Council and the Council's financial performance. It is tasked with the consideration of call-ins, policy development, performance monitoring and reviewing corporate strategies.

The Committee's workload over the past year can be broken down as follows:

(a) Scrutinising and monitoring Cabinet work

The Committee has a proactive role in this area through carrying out pre-scrutiny work. This involved considering the Cabinet's Key Decision List (Forward Plan) for the coming months on a meeting by meeting basis.

(b) Call-ins

The Committee received one call-in this year.

The call-in received was on the Cabinet Decision ((C-054-2016/17) on Waste management Policies.

The Call-in was for:

The Waste and Recycling Policy, specifically policy 10 on the supply of waste and recycling services to land registered on the Local Land Property Gazetteer. It did not concern any other Waste and Recycling Policy adopted by the Cabinet at its meeting on 2 February 2017.

A meeting was called prior to it being considered by the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss this call-in on the Cabinet decision on Waste Management Policies; specifically policy 10 on the supply of waste and recycling services to land registered on the Local Land Property Gazetteer.



Attending were the two lead signatories of the Call-in, Councillors J Lea and S Kane; the relevant Cabinet member, Councillor W Breare-Hall; and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor M Sartin.

Councillor Breare-Hall thanked Councillor Lea in bringing this discrepancy to his attention. She had raised potential flaws in the current policy which should be revised to take this into account once the relevant departments have been consulted, i.e. Council Tax, Planning and Waste Management. He was

keen to avoid bad practice.

Councillor Breare-Hall was happy to take this away, review this specific aspect of the policy and report back. Councillor Lea agreed that this was the best way forward.

This Call-in would now be treated as being withdrawn; the Portfolio Holder would review this aspect of the policy (item 10) and would consult members of the Call-in on a revised report.

(c) Select Committees work programme monitoring

The Committee received regular updates from the Chairmen of the four Select Committees reporting on the progress made on their current work programme. This allowed the Committee to monitor their performance and if necessary adjust their work plans to take into account new proposals and urgent items.

(d) Items considered by the committee this year

Over the year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received various presentations and considered a range of diverse topics.

Presentations:

(i) Management of Epping Forest – In June 2016 the Committee received a presentation from Mr P Thomson, Superintendent of Epping Forest and Ms J Adams, Chairman of the Friends of Epping Forest on the Management Plan Consultation for Epping Forest.

The consultation Epping Forest – The Next 10 Years ran from June to October 2015 with 1,600 individuals being contacted and responses received from 432.

The consultation was broken down into 6 themes:

- (1) Public recreation and enjoyment.
- (2) Preservation of the natural aspect.
- (3) Protection of the unspoilt forest.
- (4) Regulation and management.
- (5) Heritage.
- (6) Deer management.

The Corporation intended to promote equality duties, public involvement and volunteering. The consultation document was to be published in June 2016 and the Public Consultation on 6 themes in the summer of 2017.

The Committee also heard from Ms J Adams regarding the Friends of Epping



Forest.

The Friends had been in existence for 45 years and were the only group focused on the Forest as a whole and all its related interests. They were also the largest single voluntary membership organisation in the forest. The Friends participated in planning consultation, undertook guided walks, produced publications, operated a visitor centre and was involved in fundraising.

The Friends had concerns about the Forest's future, which were summarised as follows:

- (1) Wood pasture restoration.
- (2) Cycling.
- (3) Litter
- (4) Development threatening the Forest.
- (5) Risk of the Forest losing its naturalness.
- (6) Localism – a potential benefit but posed risks.

A particular concern was that the Forest could become a park in the future and lose its status as a natural forest/woodland.

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

(ii) Transport for London – Central Line Services and Infrastructure - The Committee welcomed two officers from Transport for London, Chris Taggart the General Manager (Central Line) and Mark Hart the Stakeholder Engagement Manager (Bakerloo, Central and Victoria Lines). Mr Taggart explained that he was the leader of the operational team that carried out the day to day management of the Central Line, including Station Staff and Drivers. Mr Hart explained that it was his job to notify any stakeholders of any activity on the rail lines, or noise or if he had information to impart on station closures etc. He also had the job to notify people on upcoming works or problems.



The TfL officers had received advanced notice of the topics and any questions that the Committee wanted to cover at this meeting and answered them at the meeting during the course of their presentation.

The meeting noted that:

- Only about 3% of journeys started at the ticket office, most of them were undertaken by the use of oyster cards;
- There were currently no plans to extend the night time services to Epping. Night trains have now been running for several months and this service would be reviewed in the New Year. Stopping trains at Loughton allows them to turn around;
- They had introduced a new timetable on the Central Line in August trying to balance as best they could the service over the Central Line Services as a whole;
- They recognised concerns of customers from Roding Valley, Grange Hill and Chigwell and would be looking at the timetable to see if they could off-set any negative impact as a result of the last timetable;
- All stations had toilet facilities; open at different times of the day. They were sometime taken out of use for maintenance or through vandalism. There was a current map displaying toilet facilities, but that was out of date and was currently being reviewed;

- All their stations now have Wi-Fi but it could not be received in the tunnels and there were currently no plans to extend it;
- There was a separate team in TfL that looks after the Car Park arrangements. In regards to Epping, they are looking at improving car parking provision there and were currently reviewing their options; and
- TfL were planning to deliver 30 new step free stations over the next five years and are currently working through which stations these would be;

Asked what the use of the word 'capacity' meant in terms of the Underground, the meeting was told that it could mean a number of things such as the number of carriages, or trains or passengers. It could also have something to do with the signalling systems. They could operate up to 33 trains per hour and were at their limit at present, even if they had more trains.



The Central Line had very reliable automated signalling systems; but when it goes wrong it can go badly wrong especially when you had such a tight timetable as they had. However the systems were generally very good and reliable on the Central Line.

The introduction of new and air-conditioned rolling stock – TfL were working on this at present, the following lines were currently being upgraded – Piccadilly Line, Bakerloo Line the Waterloo and City Line – are all part of this project.

The CCTV systems installed between 2000 and 2010 will be replaced starting around 2018 as they have come to the end of their useful lives. The new systems will be digital and will have better integration with the other CCTV systems.

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

(iii) Presentation from the Epping Forest College - At their meeting in February 2017, the Committee received a presentation from the recently appointed principal of Epping Forest College, Ms Famili, who had been invited to address the committee on the recent Ofsted report on its 'inadequate' judgement of the quality of its local further education facilities and services.

The inspectors at their January visit indicated in their unofficial comments that they were very impressed at the speed and progress that had been made since their last visit and that the college was addressing the issues. Part of the improvements was down to change in management and governance.

The culture of the college had radically changed, it no longer has the mood of despair and disappointment; and with the help of her colleagues they were turning the college around.

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

(See Case Study for full details)

Other Topics Considered:

(i) Over the course of the year the Committee considered the Cabinet's Forward Plan and Key Objectives for the coming year on a regular meeting by meeting basis. At each meeting the Committee looked at the updated list of the coming year's work programmed in for the Cabinet.

(ii) In June 2015 the Committee received a report setting out the year end outturn of the Corporate Plan Key Objectives. The Committee reviewed the report setting out the final outturn and progress made of the Council's Key Objectives for 2015/16.

(iii) The Corporate Plan, Key Action Plan 2017/18 was reviewed in July 2016. The Corporate Plan included the aims and objectives which are the Council's highest level strategic intentions. It was an early opportunity for members to have some input into the Corporate Plan for 2017/18.

2017/18 would be the third year in the lifetime of the aims and objectives and a draft key action plan for 2017/18 had been produced building on activities identified in the action plan for the current fiscal year.

Key Action Plans were monitored by the Select Committees, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on a quarterly basis. As living documents they could be subject to change or development as appropriate to reflect emerging priorities or unforeseen circumstances.

(iv) During the year the Committee reviewed and commented on the quarterly progress of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17.

(v) The Committee noted that the Government's Communities and Local Government Committee had launched an inquiry into overview and scrutiny in local government. The aim was to consider whether overview and scrutiny arrangements were working effectively and whether local communities were able to contribute to and monitor the work of local authorities.

The Committee agreed that officers should respond to the inquiry and it was also agreed that the response should be approved by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(vi) In April 2017, the Committee received a Public Question on the recent hand over of the contract for the management of the District's Leisure Centres.

The 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 an answer and promised that it would be followed up by a more thorough written answer from the relevant Portfolio Holder.

(vii) The Chairman of the Communities Select Committee introduced a report 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 was agreed by the Committee.

(viii) Also at this meeting the Committee agree to the establishment of a Task and Finish Panel to specifically define the objectives, scope and budget of the Transformation Programme.

(e) Case Study: Epping Forest College



In February 2017, the Chairman introduced the recently appointed principal of Epping Forest College, Saboohi Famili, who had been invited to address the committee on the recent Ofsted report on its 'inadequate' judgement of the quality of its local further education facilities and services.

Ms Famili started by saying she was happy to be sharing the plans of the college to move forward from their current situation. She had been appointed to this post in September 2016, and within five weeks they had an Ofsted visit, resulting in an 'inadequate' marking. The reasons for this were mainly because of lack of scrutiny of the situation and the lack of scrutiny from the governors to ensure that the problems were addressed. At this time they had also self assessed as inadequate and Ofsted had merely confirmed this assessment. She was pleased that one of the strengths identified by Ofsted was that the new leadership had accurately identified the problems that they faced.

As a result of this judgements they would now have more regular visits from Ofsted setting out the Ofsted support in the year to come and then will carry out another major inspection in 12 to 15 months; so they were looking to next April to have full inspection to prove that the college had moved away from being an inadequate organisation.

The inspectors came back on 26 January and their unofficial comments were that they were very impressed at the speed and progress that had been made and that the college was addressing the issues. Part of the improvements was down to change in management and governance.

Presently their actions plans, as noted by Ofsted, had clear milestones and achievement of impacts. They were living documents that were regularly updated. They also engaged with their learners and had monthly forums where they shared problems and tapped into the talents of the young people, because it was their college and they needed their help to take the college forward.

The culture of the college had radically changed, it no longer had the mood of despair and disappointment; and with the help of her colleagues they were turning the college around. There was still a long way to go as it could not be changed overnight but there was a confidence that they could turn it around and engage with staff and learners. They had a key project going on called 'Today, Tomorrow, Together' to engage with their stakeholders as we were aware that they had also let some of their key stakeholders down, including businesses, who had to look else where for their training needs.

One of the key purposes of the college was to listen and strategically plan the future of the organisation. This 'hiccup' was something that they would be able to address within 12 months; there were already signs of improvement at the college which would get reported on by Ofsted on a regular basis. They have at least three more reports before they have a full Ofsted next year and one of the key things was that they looked forward to was the next 10 to 15 years instead of being completely inundated with the task in hand. They were looking to where they needed to be to support the local economic development of the area and the workforce of the future and also be a college where you would be proud to send your children to.



The overall leadership of the college had changed, they had only one member of staff from the previous leadership team; this was due to colleagues realising that the way forward was to be different to what they had done in the past and they also had retirements and other natural departures within their organisation.

After some close questioning from Members, Councillor Sartin thanked Ms Famili for her detailed and frank presentation and asked if she happy to attend a future meeting to update the Committee on progress made. Ms Famili said that she would be happy to do so and that her invitation still stood for any Councillors to come and visit the college.

SELECT COMMITTEES

1. COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

The Communities Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor Y Knight (Chairman)

Councillor G Shiell (Vice Chairman)

Councillors R Baldwin, A Beales, K Chana, R Gadsby, L Girling, S Heap, L Hughes, S Jones, S Murray, A Mitchell, B Rolfe, B Surtees and H Whitbread

The Lead Officer was Alan Hall, Director of Communities. The Committee also appreciated the Housing Portfolio Holder, Councillor S Stavrou, attending the meetings to help them with their deliberations.

Wyn Marshall represented the Tenants and Leaseholder Federation, attending the meetings as a non-voting co-opted member to provide the views of residents and stakeholders.

Terms of Reference

The Communities Select Committee was tasked:

To undertake reviews of the services and related functions of the Communities Directorate;

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 the residents;

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;

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;

To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;

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;

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;

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

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.

The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:

(i) Communities Directorate's Housing Service Standards – At the beginning of the year (June 2016) the Committee received a report from the Director of Communities regarding the Housing Service Standards – Performance 2015/16 and Review.

In 2007, the then Housing Portfolio Holder agreed a range of Housing Service Standards covering all of the Housing Services' main areas of activity. It was also agreed that, annually, the Housing Services' performance against the Housing Service Standards should be considered and whether any changes should be made to the Service Standards. Tenants were provided with a handbook setting out all the agreed Service Standards; this information was also available on-line.

The Committee agreed and recommended to the Portfolio Holder the various small changes proposed in the report.

(ii) Key Performance Indicators – Outturn (Q4) Performance - The Select Committee received a report regarding Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance from the Director of Communities.

The Q4 (Outturn) performance summary in respect of each of the KPIs falling within the Communities Select Committee's areas of responsibility for 2015/16 together with details of the specific twelve month performance for each indicator are listed below.



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

Ten of the KPIs fell within this Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these indicators was as follows:

- (i) 8 (80%) indicators achieved target;
- (ii) 2 (20%) indicators did not achieve target; and
- (iii) 0 (0%) indicators performed within their tolerated amber margin.

(iii) Key Performance Indicators - Quarterly Progress – the Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(iv) Housing Strategy: 6 and 12 Month Progress Reports on Key Action Plan 2016-2017 - The Select Committee received 6 and 12 month progress reports regarding the Housing Strategy – Key Action Plan 2016-2017 from the Director of Communities.

The Council had adopted a Housing Strategy that assessed the District's current and future housing needs and set out the Council's approach to meeting those needs. The Strategy also included a Key Action Plan which set out the proposed actions that would be taken by the Council to contribute towards the achievement of the housing objectives over the first year of the Housing Strategy.

(v) Housing and Planning Act 2016 – Summary of Key Housing Proposals – The Select Committee received a report regarding the Housing and Planning Act 2016 – Summary of Key Housing Proposals from the Director of Communities.



Following a lengthy and somewhat controversial passage, the Housing and Planning Bill, now the Housing and Planning Act 2016 received Royal Assent on 12 May 2016.

The new Act comprised a number of provisions relating to both housing and planning, in particular it covered:

- (a) Lifetime and fixed term tenancies;
- (b) Voluntary Right to Buy for housing association tenants and sales of high value void Council properties;
- (c) Starter Homes; and
- (d) “Pay to Stay” – Increased rents for tenants on higher incomes.

The Committee members expressed some concern about the Bill’s consequences in terms of the security for neighbourhood cohesion and the authority being forced to sell the higher value properties that they possessed.

(vi) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16 – Quarter 4 Outturn Position – The Select Committee received a report regarding the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Position from the Director of Communities.

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 providing a clear statement of the Council’s overall intentions for these five years.

Some actions had cross directorate responsibility, where this was the case the most appropriate Select Committee was requested to consider the action. This report presented outturn progress against the Key Action Plan for 2015/16 for actions most appropriately considered by this Select Committee at the end of 2015/16.

There were 55 actions in the Key Action Plan 2015/16, at the end of the year 15 actions fell within the areas of responsibility of this Select Committee. At the end of the year:

- (i) 8 (53%) of these actions had been achieved at year end; and
- (ii) 7 (47%) of these actions had not been achieved by year end.

(vii) Presentation on Disabled Facilities Grants - The Select Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director – Private Sector Housing and Communities Support regarding Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

Disabled Facilities Grants are a statutory provision applicable to private home owners and private tenants enabling them to live at home despite living with disabilities.

Outline of DFGs: DFGs were means tested and could be paid



to a maximum of £30,000; During the last year, 12 straight lifts were installed at around £900.00 each; 5 curved lifts at £3,000; 37 level access showers at £7,000 each; and 1 extension a year at £30,000 each.

DFG Process: An occupational therapist takes a referral from Essex County Council; the householder makes an application to the District Council; An initial means test is carried out; information gathering in support of the application; the grant would be approved by the District Council; and the work carried out.

The whole process takes about 18 months.

(viii) Annual Feedback on Crucial Crew Event and Proposals for the Future - The Select Committee received a report from the Community, Health and Wellbeing Manager regarding the Crucial Crew Initiative.



Crucial Crew was an annual initiative which was facilitated and delivered by the Council's Community, Health and Wellbeing Team in collaboration with the Community Safety Team. It was intended for educating primary school pupils aged 10 (Year 6) in a range of personal safety, health and wellbeing topics. With schools reporting their curriculum time increasingly tightly programmed, Crucial Crew was seen as a vital mechanism for pupils.

Crucial Crew had existed in the district for over 11 years and delivered to primary school pupils over a two week period in June.

In 2016, the scenarios delivered were:

- (a) Online safety, cyber bullying and child exploitation – Essex Police.
- (b) Alcohol and drug awareness – AlcoHelp.
- (c) Bullying and Peer Pressure – Red Balloon Family.
- (d) Healthy eating and physical activity – ACE (NHS).
- (e) Smoking awareness – Provide (NHS).
- (f) Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental responsibility – EFDC.
- (g) Road safety awareness – Essex County Council.
- (h) Fire safety – Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.
- (i) Safety around construction sites – Mears.
- (j) Safety around large vehicles – Sainsburys.

The Select Committee noted the issue of self harming among young people and other mental health problems and thought it was important to de-stigmatise this situation and facilitate a process for greater awareness.

(ix) Incentives for Tenants Downsizing Accommodation - The Council's Housing Allocations Scheme was reviewed in 2015 with the revised scheme coming into force on 27 July 2015; When considering the recommendations of the then Housing Select Committee, the Cabinet agreed that the financial incentives offered to tenants moving to any property with less bedrooms than their current property would be increased. The financial incentives offered for releasing any bedroom had been doubled under the current scheme, with a maximum payment of £4,000 being made. An additional payment of £500.00 was made to cover decoration costs over and above the Council's standard decorations allowance. There were a range of other incentives offered as well.



The Council employed a Re-Housing Support Officer who offered support to tenants who were downsizing accommodation in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme. The Select Committee reviewed the arrangements for financial incentives and considered that they were adequate and satisfactory.

(x) Homeoption Choice Based Lettings Scheme – Progress report - The Choice Based Lettings Scheme was introduced in November 2007 and was necessary in meeting the requirements of Government that such a scheme was in place by 2010. The scheme was administered by the external Choice Based Lettings agency Locata Housing Services (LHS). Under the scheme all vacant social rented properties were advertised to applicants on the website with a two weekly Property List giving relevant details. Applicants applied for a property by expressing an interest in up to a maximum of three properties for which they have an assessed need.



The Select Committee analysed the HomeOption Choice Based Lettings Information Bulletin for the period 27 July 2015 to 27 July 2016.

Almost 97% of Homeseekers expressing an interest in properties did so over the Internet. The remaining 3% telephoned, received help from staff at the reception computer or used text. Around 84% of all applicants registered on the Housing Register had participated in the scheme during the last year.

(xi) Corporate Plan Action Plan Progress Quarterly Progress – the Select Committee received quarterly updates on the Council's corporate action plan pertaining to their area of responsibility.

(xii) Community Services Summer Activities 2016 - The Committee noted that the Council's Community Services Team organises and delivers a summer holiday activity programme each year, providing a wide range of activities for engaging children, young people and their families.

This year, over 2,500 youngsters participated in the extensive range of activities on offer.

The Select Committee were advised that the Community Services Team had encountered numerous issues and problems with the online booking portal accessed via the Council's website. This meant that the number of online bookings taken were less than last year's although administration staff had been excellent in providing support to help people complete bookings by phone. However, a new corporate online booking system was currently being investigated. Fortunately these issues did not have too much of an effect upon overall participation numbers for the summer.

(xiii) Presentation from Chief Inspector Denise Morrissey, Essex Police District Commander for Brentwood and Epping Forest - Chief Inspector D Morrissey gave a presentation in which she outlined the following that:

Epping Forest District had 8 tube stations; The district borders three Metropolitan Police boroughs; 80% of criminal suspects the Police had here, lived outside the district; April – August 2015 – 3,222 crimes were reported in the area; April – August 2016 – 3,530 crimes were reported in the area, which constituted an increase of 9.5% (308 crimes); Violent crimes against the person; (i) without injury - saw an increase of 24% and (ii) with an injury - went up by 32%. Approximately 30% of violent crime occurred in the home.



Anti-Social Behaviour – 3.4% increase in offences (66 more offences); Chief Inspector D Morrissey had established a problem solving team and Community Hub in September 2014 for co-ordinating anti-crime efforts.

Resourcing had been a major factor in policing recently as Epping Police Station had closed and the nearest police station to the district was now in Harlow. A police contact point had been established at the District Council's Civic Offices for reporting low level crime and Chief Inspector D Morrissey had 10 Police Constables and 10 Police Community Support Officers to deploy.

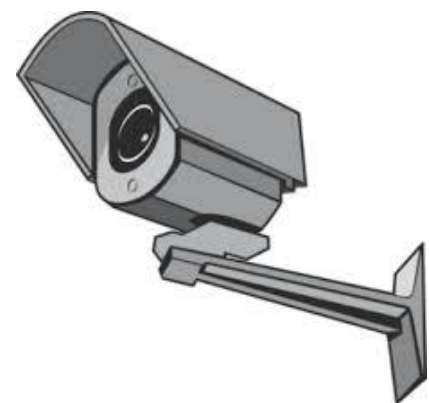
Two important police operations had also been initiated, Operation Scorpion for dealing with travelling criminals and Operation Raptor, an anti-gang project.

(xiv) Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Annual Report 2015/16 - The Committee was advised that CSPs provided a statutory function in all District, City and Borough Councils across the UK. The partnerships consisted of representatives from a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations. Each year they were required to produce an annual report on the initiatives and work that they had undertaken in their designated area to address local crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. The report covered the financial status of the CSP and an overview of the work undertaken in addressing key priorities for the district. The annual report was supported by a range of case studies.



There was concern at the meeting that gaps existed in the amount of protection that could be provided to residents. Officers had engaged with Social Care and Community Mental Health Teams but this was still a challenge as they continued to work more closely with these agencies where necessary.

(xv) Proposed Decommissioning of CCTV - A decommissioning assessment of CCTV system currently installed across the district was undertaken in 2015 as part of the review process for the production of the Council's CCTV Strategy 2016-2022. This met with the guidance provided in the CCTV Code of Practice which stated that regular reviews of CCTV systems should be undertaken to ensure that the use of surveillance cameras remained in pursuit of a legitimate aim and that a pressing need existed. As a result, the Council's CCTV Officer had identified two sites for potential decommissioning which was based upon the last two years of service and factors such as reduction of service requirement and on-going costs.



These were the first cases to arise under the Council's new CCTV Strategy; therefore the Portfolio Holder for Safer Greener and Transport sought the views of the Select Committee on the proposed de-commissioning, prior to making a formal Portfolio Holder Decision. It was further advised that this would assist in assessing future requirements.

The Select Committee were advised that Parish and Town Councils could fund their own CCTV cameras and that the District Council could also facilitate this for a fee. There was concern that the removal of these cameras in difficult areas could leave residents vulnerable. However, the Select Committee was advised that the Cabinet had agreed the CCTV Strategy and a pressing need had to be demonstrated in order for cameras to be installed.

(xvi) Review of Epping Forest Careline Alarm Monitoring Service - The Assistant Director (Housing Operations) presented a report setting out options for the future of the Council's Careline Monitoring Centre, based at Parsonage Court, Loughton.



The service was introduced in June 1984 and offers a twenty-four hour, 365 days per year, emergency alarm monitoring service to older and disabled people living within the District. The Service was also offered to other vulnerable groups including victims of domestic violence and younger people with disabilities. There were currently 2,572 properties (representing around 3,500 people) in the District linked to the centre in this way.

The Select Committee considered the following four options for the future delivery of the Careline Monitoring Service:

Option one – that the Careline Monitoring Service continues to be provided by the Council under the current arrangements;

Option two – the Council provides an enhanced Careline Monitoring service;

Option three – the Council provides the service through another provider 24/7; and

Option four – the Council provides the service through another service provider overnight.

Unison having fully considered Options 1 to 4 had discarded Option One, which they felt was clearly untenable and Option Two which was clearly too expensive. Unison felt that Option Four appeared to be in the best interests of both the Council and the employees and they asked that it be explored further.

The Chairman of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation reported that they agreed with the officers' recommendation for Option Three, that the Careline Monitoring Service be outsourced to an external provider.

On consideration, the Communities Select Committee recommended Option Three to the Cabinet, that the Council's Careline Monitoring Service be outsourced to an external provider through a competitive tendering exercise.

[\(See Case Study for full details\)](#)

(xvii) HRA Financial Plan 2016/17 – Six-Monthly Review - The Cabinet had asked the Communities Select Committee to review the HRA Financial Plan twice each year. In addition, senior Housing and Finance officers also reviewed the Plan in July and January each year.

SDS Consultancy had acted as the Council's HRA Business Planning Consultants for many years and had undertaken its six month review of the current HRA Financial Plan to take account of the Council's current financial position and national and local policies.

The Select Committee was asked to consider their report and comment on or raise any concerns it found.

(xviii) Presentation by Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau - The Committee received a presentation from officers of the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) outlining their value and impact on society especially in the Epping Forest District area and through the use of grants from the Council.

The Committee noted that during 2015/16 the CAB service for Epping Forest had advised 2,761 clients on 8,061 issues. They had 9 part time staff and 52 volunteers working in 6 locations and were one of over 300 independent charities that made up the Citizens Advice network. Nationally, 2

in every 3 clients had their problems solved. And it was noted that they were now offering “web chat” in the Epping Forest area.



Citizens Advice
the charity for your community

They worked with some of those most in need; some 38% of their clients were less likely to be in employment; 35% were likely to be in debt; 39% had a long term health problem or were disabled; and 26% were less likely to own their own homes.

They gave examples of some clients' stories giving case history and eventual outcome. It was noted that 78% of their clients said that they would not have been able to resolve their problem without the CAB. They also had an impact on their clients' health and wellbeing, most significantly around mental health. 4 in 5 clients felt less stressed, depressed or anxious following advice.

They also provided value to the local authority, for example by reducing the cases of homelessness, estimated to be about £114,573, and also to society in general whereby for every £1 invested in Citizens Advice Epping Forest District:

- generated at least £2.94 in fiscal benefits savings to the government by reducing health service demand, local authority homelessness services;
- provided £15.28 in public value with wider economic and social benefits such as improvements in participation and productivity for clients and volunteers; and
- provided £18.50 in benefits to individuals giving income through benefits gained, debts written off and consumer problems resolved.

(xix) Extension of the Funding of 2 Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau Debt Advisors -

The CAB had reported that during the first six months of 2015/16 the Debt Advisors had managed debts of around £713,000 and assisted 304 clients. Around 97 (32%) of these clients were Council tenants. The CAB was required under the Agreement to have one Debt Advisor based at the Limes Centre, Chigwell for one half day each week. The CAB extended this service to 2 half days each week in 2015. The CAB had reported that in the first 6 months of 2015/2016, around 120 (40%) of the clients assisted were first seen at the Limes Centre.

On consideration of the benefits of having these offices, the Communities Select Committee strongly recommend to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee that the funding of the Citizens Advice Bureau's (CAB's) two existing Debt Advisors be extended for a further year from 1 April 2017.

(xx) Reality Roadshow - The report on the last years Reality Road show was introduced by the Assistant Community Health and Wellbeing Manager. She reported that the Reality Roadshow initiative was a personal safety, health & wellbeing event that brought together a host of statutory and voluntary agencies, to deliver a full day of educational workshops to Year 9 (14 year old) pupils at secondary school in the district. It was specifically tailored to address young people's issues that have been identified as a priority concern locally.

The Roadshow was co-ordinated by the Council's Community Health and Wellbeing Team, providing over 900 pupils in the District with expert advice and guidance on making the right choices in life for good health and wellbeing.

The schools were not charged for the Roadshow as they were funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner and Essex County Council.

(xxi) Homelessness Initiatives - The Committee was asked by the Housing Portfolio Holder as part of their Work Programme to consider various mitigation strategies in order to deal with the



current and future increasing pressures due to the rise in homelessness. The latest figures on homelessness in England revealed that, nationally the total number of households in temporary accommodation had increased by 53% from 48,010 in December 2010 to 73,120 in June 2016, with 14,930 households being accepted as homeless between 1 July and 30 September 2016. Local authorities took action to prevent a further 52,920 households becoming homeless in the same period which increased by over 2,000 compared to the previous quarter.

The Committee was asked to consider strategies for the Homelessness Prevention Service. In 2015/2016 the service prevented homelessness in 625 cases. The number of cases being prevented in the first six months of this year was 264 which may result in a lesser number being prevented in 2016/2017.

As at 30 September 2016 (date of the last Government statistical return) there were 111 applicants placed in both temporary and interim accommodation, which had resulted in the homeless persons' hostel at Norway House, North Weald and Hemnall House, Epping being full most of the time.

Furthermore, as the chalets in the grounds of the Hostel were falling into disrepair, the option of replacing the chalets with "modular units" was being investigated, which may enable the Council to increase the number of units in a more cost effective way.

The numbers placed in B&B had increased from single figures to around 20-25 applicants.

The Committee then considered the 'invest to save' funding proposals for two initiatives.

One was for '*rental loans*', a scheme to provide applicants with a rental loan to meet the costs of (or contribute towards) the first month's rent in advance when securing accommodation in the private sector.

The other invest to save proposal was for '*Landlord Deposits*'. In addition to meeting the cost of the first month's rent, applicants also must pay a landlord's deposit. The cost of the deposit was in accordance with Housing Benefit Local Housing Allowance rates.

It was therefore considered that the funding should now be made available for rental loans equivalent to 4 weeks rent and/or landlord deposits (lodged with a third party by the landlord) in appropriate cases with repayments being made for both loans over an increased period of 36 months in order to make it more affordable to the applicant.

The Committee then went on to consider the placement of homeless households by London Boroughs outside of London. Following representations from Essex councils, figures for placements across Essex have now, for the first time, been provided by around 24 of the 32 London Boroughs. As not all London Boroughs had provided this information, the true figures were likely to be much higher, but Boroughs had placed applicants in 47 private properties (that we were aware of) in the last 12 months.

Some are in order for London Boroughs to discharge their homelessness duties which can lead to the Council taking responsibility for such households should homelessness re-occur after two years.

The Select Committee made a number of recommendations to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee; including requests for funding an additional Homelessness Prevention Officer, homelessness reviews by an external by an external company and an outreach service for rough sleepers.

(xxii) Council Rent Increase 2017/18 Briefing – The Committee received a short briefing about the required rent reductions for Council tenants for 2017/18 and that the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee would be asked to make a recommendation to the Cabinet on a Council rent reduction for 2017/18.

The Government had determined that all councils and housing associations must reduce their rent by 1% each year for four years. This started last year, leaving the Council with an estimated £390,000 less rental income in the current year.



A reduction of 1% for next year would mean a further £303,000 forecast reduction for the next year; the reduction for next year would be less than for the current year as the first new properties under the Council Housebuilding Programme would be built next year, bringing in additional income.

It was noted that although this was generally good news for tenants, it would leave the HRA with less money to deliver the Council's Housing Service.

(xxiii) Annual Report of the Youth Council – at their last meeting of the year the Select Committee received their annual report from the Youth Council on their activities and achievements during the current year and plans for the next 12 months.



They thanked the members for the Council's loyalty and support for the Youth Council over the past nine years. The Committee noted that these were newly elected members and were looking forward to their two years of service. In total about 25 Youth Councillors were elected in November 2016.

They thanked members for the grant of £8,000 project money that had enabled them to deliver the highly successful Emotional Health & Wellbeing project – 'MiLife' in seven secondary schools.

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

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

They also reported that in their short time as youth councillors they have obtained external funding of £2,700 from various sources over the last 4 months.

As a result of the good work undertaken by the Youth Council over the previous 12 months and their plans for the forthcoming year, the Select Committee agreed to release the £5,000 DDF funding allocated for the Youth Council.

(xxiv) Presentation on Disabled Adaptions to Council Premises - A short presentation on Disabled Adaptions to Council properties was given by the Assistant Director (Housing Property and Development), supported by the Housing Asserts Manager. The meeting noted that about six months ago the Assistant Director (Private Sector Housing and Communities Support) gave a short presentation on grants for adaptions carried out in the private sector. The Committee then asked for a similar presentation on adaptations to Council properties.

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



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

Case Study: Review of Epping Forest Careline Alarm Monitoring Service

In November 2016 the Committee received a report setting out options for the future of the Council's Careline Monitoring Centre, based at Parsonage Court, Loughton. The service was introduced in June 1984 and offers a twenty-four hour, 365 days per year, emergency alarm monitoring service to older and disabled people living within the District. The Service was also offered to other vulnerable groups including victims of domestic violence and younger people with disabilities. There were currently 2,572 properties (representing around 3,500 people) in the District linked to the centre in this way.

Around 1,380 of the connections were private sector dwellings, which were connected via a dispersed alarm, which has an associated neck worn radio trigger. A range of various sensors were offered such as on line smoke alarms, fall and flood detectors. The user paid an annual rental to the Council for the service; in 2015/2016 the Council received a total income of around £185,000, inclusive of associated sensors. The Council worked in partnership with Essex County Council which funds the first 12 weeks rental for the user.

The charges made by the Council were very competitive compared to other authorities in Essex.

It was noted that as the Careline Monitoring Centre had expanded in terms of the number of private sector connections and the advances in technology, the management and operational aspects of the service had become more complex. In addition, there had been difficulties in recruiting staff due to the nature of the work and the salary level. This had led to additional pressures on existing staff that have had to cover, not only vacant posts, but also annual leave and sickness absences. Also, all new staff complete an 8 week training programme prior to commencing full duties, which adds to the burden of covering shifts.

In 2011 the Careline Monitoring Service became Telecare Services Association (TSA) accredited. TSA is a nationally recognised standards body for the delivery of technology enabled care and support services in the UK. The Council's Careline Service has to date met all of the Audit requirements.

Importantly, the TSA have recently brought to the attention of the Council and authorities nationally the British Standard (BS8591), extracts of which currently states:

"There should be a minimum of two operators in an ARC [control centre] at all times, capable of carrying out all operational procedures, at least one of whom should be at their workstation at all

times”.

TSA have also confirmed that the above standard was under review and should be brought in line with the European Standard. Although 2 operators on duty at all times was expected to be desired, this would result in Centres who do not have 2 operators on duty at all times being required to put contingency measures in place should more than one emergency call be received at any one time.

Although the service currently provided an excellent and reliable service to residents, due to the reasons above it was considered important that this review was undertaken to ensure the future resilience of the service. There appeared to be the following four options for the future delivery of the Careline service:

Option one – that the Careline Monitoring Service continues to be provided by the Council under the current arrangements;

Option two – the Council provides an enhanced Careline Monitoring service;

Option three – monitor the service through another provider 24/7; and

Option four – monitoring the service through another service provider overnight.

The Committee agreed to a recommendation that budget provision was made of £70k in 2017/18 and £70k in 2018/19 in order to fund the transitional arrangements. If it was agreed to outsource 24/7, the payback period would be around 9 months.

It was noted that the Careline operators had favoured Option Two but were mindful of the cost implications for this option. They had accepted that Option One could not be considered as an option and the service could not continue under the current arrangements.

They did not agree with Option Three because of the perceived implications for job losses and the adverse effect this change would have for all service users. In addition alternative arrangements would need to be made for tasks currently undertaken by the Careline team.

Careline staff wanted Option Four to be presented in more detail in the report as they thought it had not been given enough thought. The report was so amended.

Unison having fully considered Options 1 to 4 discarded Option One which they felt was clearly untenable and Option Two which was clearly too expensive.

On considering Option Three they were unsure about its value to the Council as they thought, amongst other concerns, that there were no costings for the removal of the current equipment, the Council would lose a degree of autonomy over the service, the scheme managers would lose the support of the staff and the service, redundancy costs will need to be built into the tenders and the Council would need to deal with the problems associated with keeping the service running through to the start of the transfer to an external provider.

Unison felt that Option Four appeared to be in the best interests of both the Council and the employees and they asked that it be explored further.

The Chairman of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation reported that they agreed with the officer's recommendation for Option Three, that the Careline Monitoring Service be outsourced to an external provider. They added that they would also like to commend the exceptional work that Careline staff has put in over the years.

Each option was examined in detail by the Select Committee and their merits for and against were debated. Finally, on consideration, the Select Committee recommended Option Three to the

Cabinet, that the Council's Careline Monitoring Service be outsourced to an external provider through a competitive tendering exercise.



2. GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

The Governance Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor N Avey (Chairman)

Councillor G Chambers (Vice Chairman)

Councillors D Dorrell, L Hughes, S Jones, S Kane, H Kaufman, M McEwen, L Mead, B Rolfe, D Stallan, B Surtees, H Whitbread, and D Wixley

The Lead Officer was Nigel Richardson, Assistant Director Governance, Development Management.

Terms of Reference

To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of the services and functions of the Governance Directorate;

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 Governance Directorate are appropriate and responsive to the needs of residents, service users and others;

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;

To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives on the services and functions of the Governance Directorate and any implications for the Council's residents, service users and others, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;

To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;

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 Governance Directorate, to help develop appropriate policy;

To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Governance Directorate, against adopted key performance indicators and identified areas of concern;

To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Governance Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny, for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and

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.

The Panel scrutinised a number of issues over the last year, which included:

(i) **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.

They noted that 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 the consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by the authority complied with the provisions of the Council's Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy and Policy.

(ii) 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.

Of the five Key Performance Indicators that fell within the Governance Select Committee's areas of responsibility, they achieved the following:

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

(iii) 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.

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

(iv) 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.

(v) Review of Elections and EU Referendum – in September 2016 the Select Committee received a report regarding the May Elections and EU Referendum 2016 – Lessons Learnt from the Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management.

The report discussed the planning processes and implementation of the following elections held on 5 May 2016:

- (1) The election of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex.
- (2) 21 District Council wards were involved, one was uncontested and two in one ward caused by a resignation.
- (3) 11 contested Parish Council wards.



During this period there was a national campaign for the registration deadline publicising the opportunity of registering online. It was advised that the Electoral Commission publicity campaign confused many voters into thinking that they needed to re-register. Staff therefore had to undertake many hundreds of unnecessary deletions of duplicate registrations.

All of the local election papers for May were printed by the Council's Reprographics Section which again provided excellent service. Papers for both the PCC election and EU Referendum were printed externally, with no problems. All books were hand checked.

The use of a commonly used name for the same candidate in two wards had not been picked up at ballot paper draft and checking stages. Ballot papers were printed and postal votes despatched before the error was spotted. Officers had subsequently reviewed the checking process.

The Select Committee was advised that:

- (a) 8,700 postal packs were sent out for May, 250 of these had an issue error and were re-issued. 5,874 packs were returned and counted, a 67.5% return rate.
- (b) 10,200 postal packs were sent out for the EU Referendum, 1,500 more than May. A further issue of 1,850 were sent out over a week later. 11,069 were returned and counted, a 91.9% return rate.

At both elections all polling stations opened on time and operated all day without problem. The entire District's polling stations were operational for both the May and the June events. The Elections Office was busy on both days (22/23 June) as many callers needed advice on the voting process.

Future elections:

In May 2017 there would be County Council elections only. In May 2018 there were solely District elections. Lessons learnt would be fed back into the process for next year which would be beginning shortly. It was advised that in 2020 the district had scheduled quadruple elections, Parliamentary, PCC, District and Parish.

The Electoral Commission had recently published their reports into the May and June events as part of their recommendations they raised the issue of elections scheduled for May 2020. As indicated earlier, that year would see Local District and Parish elections combined with PCC and a Parliamentary election based on the new constituency boundaries. Apart from being a challenge to deliver, it would be potentially confusing for the voter due to the different franchises for each election and different voting systems as well.



(vi) Key Performance Indicators - Quarterly Progress – the Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(vii) Corporate Plan Action Plan Progress Quarterly Progress – the Select Committee received quarterly updates on the Council's corporate action plan pertaining to their area of responsibility.

The Select Committee received the Annual Equality Information Report 2016 from the Performance Improvement Officer.

(viii) Annual Equality Information Report 2016 - The Equality Act 2010 required 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, this report set out progress made since then, to improve the Council's services and employment practices for people with protected characteristics.

The Equality Act 2010 required that public bodies, including the Council had due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization.
- (b) Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups.
- (c) Fostering good relations between different groups.

The equality duty covered age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

(ix) Essex County Council Highways Presentation – In January 2017, the Committee received a presentation from the Strategic Development Engineer and the Strategic Development Manager from the Transportation, Planning and Development Team at Essex County Council Highways in the role of Essex County Council as Highway Consultee.

Because of the amount of interest shown beforehand, this meeting was webcast.



The Transportation, Planning and Development team were based in County Hall, Chelmsford and consisted of Engineers and Officers who covered twelve districts within Essex. Essentially they were there to protect the safety and efficiency of the highways network.

Their role was to provide responses to planning applications as a statutory consultee to both, Local Planning Authorities and Essex County Council as the Waste and Mineral Planning Authority. It was also to protect the safety and efficiency of the highway network and to promote the use of sustainable travel.

(See Case Study for full details)

(x) Review of Enforcement Activities – in April 2017 the Committee considered a comprehensive report in regard to the scope of the enforcement activities undertaken as part of the current service portfolio of the Governance Directorate, which comprised corporate fraud and planning enforcement.

Corporate Fraud - It was reported that the main purpose of the Corporate Fraud Team was to provide independent and professional investigation of all aspects of fraud affecting the Council, in order to prevent fraud and abuse and take fair and consistent action against those committing fraudulent activities



The team had taken both proactive and reactive approaches to anti-fraud work and considered all fraud referrals with a view to risk assessment and, where appropriate, investigation. Members were advised that the team was robustly proactive in the prevention and investigation of fraud within a number of high-risk areas, particularly in relation to social housing, where fraud investigation activity had resulted in policy changes and revisions to internal processes.

The Committee was advised that, although the public were encouraged to report fraud, due to the often complex nature of both criminal investigations and subsequent court action, it was important for members to understand that cases generally took significant time and resources to investigate.

Planning Enforcement - It was reported that the main purpose of the Planning Enforcement Team was to investigate alleged breaches of planning controls such as unauthorised buildings and uses and development that was not taking place in accordance with approved plans. Members were advised that the Planning Enforcement Team also assisted the Council's Tree and Landscape Section in prosecutions for destruction and damage to protected trees and the Heritage Section with unauthorised works to listed buildings.

The Committee was advised that, due to the legislative background, enforcement cases could take considerable time to resolve and that, even in simple cases, a period of six to eight months from when a complaint was received was not uncommon. The Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement) indicated that, in complex and/or contested cases, it might take some years to gather appropriate evidence and that it was important for members and the public to understand that such cases generally took significant time and resources to resolve.

(xi) Planning Applications Validation Checklist and Viability Guidance for Affordable Housing - The Committee was advised that a Local Validation Requirements List was required to be prepared by the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to specify the information usually required to support planning applications of particular type, scale or location. It was reported that the local validation list was required to be reviewed every two years, in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Order) 2015 and that failure to review the validation requirement list would mean that the Council could only require planning application submissions to contain basic detail in order make them valid.



Members noted that all planning applications were required to meet the relevant elements of the local validation list in order to be considered 'valid'; otherwise they would not be registered and consulted upon. It was only when an application had been deemed to be valid, that the start date of the planning application process commenced. The current local validation requirement list had been agreed by the former Planning Services Scrutiny Panel in 2014 and was now due for review.

The Committee therefore considered and agreed a draft revised Local Validation Requirements List to provide guidance and certainty to applicants about the information required when submitting planning and related applications, to ensure that the Council had all the necessary information that it needed to determine applications within target times.

Case Study: Essex County Council Highways Presentation

The Committee received a presentation from Matthew Lane, Strategic Development Engineer and Matthew Bradley, Strategic Development Manager from the Transportation, Planning and Development Team at Essex County Council Highways in the role of Essex County Council as Highway Consultee. Mr Lane advised that they were invited to the Select Committee to give a brief overview of the work that they were responsible for within the County.

The Transportation, Planning and Development team were based in County Hall, Chelmsford and consisted of Engineers and Officers who covered twelve districts within Essex. The work they dealt with varied and could be anything from a vehicle crossover on an unclassified road to thousands of houses as part of the Local Plan strategic site allocations, the work could be very varied and on a huge scale. They were there to provide a statutory response as a consultee to all the local planning authorities within Essex. They also respond to the Essex County Council Waste and Mineral planning authority which deal with quarries and schools. Essentially they were there to protect the safety and efficiency of the highways network.



Their role was to provide responses to planning applications as a statutory consultee to Local Planning Authorities, Essex County Council and Waste and Mineral Planning Authority and to protect the safety and efficiency of the highway network and to promote the use of sustainable travel.

EFDC would consult the Strategic Development Department with an application. It was then the responsibility of the team to look through the application in detail and either contact EFDC for more information or if there was sufficient information to determine the application within 21 days of

receipt.

When considering an application, for the majority of proposals, a site visit would need to be arranged and to take into consideration, if the site had previously been considered and there were no changes then the decision would remain as previously determined and a site visit would not be needed.

Depending on the scale of the proposal a transport assessment would be required for 50 or more residential dwellings, to take into consideration the junction impact, site access and sustainable travel in the area. The applicant would employ transport consultants to produce a TA and they would conduct a traffic count and speed data and model the impact of the assessment. ECC would assess the modelling and check that it was done within industry standards. That could then lead on to sustainable travel considerations especially where people want to reduce their vehicle movements and there could be better bus services, good footways and cycle route connections.

They consult with a variety of other departments within the Highway Authority for example Passenger Transport and Public Rights of Way to see if traffic calming can be implicated and yellow line provision in developments. Internal roads would be checked with the Essex Design guide making sure they were fit for purpose. They also check that new dwellings comply with the Parking Standards, unfortunately they have a different view to the districts and boroughs view regarding the Parking Standards as they have to look at it as highway safety not as the loss of parking.

Once they had investigated and completed an application they would then make their recommendations which would consist of one of the following responses:

- a) From a highway and transportation perspective the Highway Authority had no comments to make on the proposal;
- b) From a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority subject to the following requirements:
 - Must accord with both National and Local Planning Policies; and
 - Conditions/Works to mitigate the impact of the development;
- c) From a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal is not acceptable to the Highway Authority for the following reasons:
 - Contrary to both National/Local Policies;
 - Safety Issues – evidence based;
 - Unable to mitigate the impact of the development.

Frequent Highway Misconceptions

Perceived traffic impact and speed – they do not look to assess impact until there were over 50 dwellings as anything smaller would not impact on the highways. If there was a safety measure then they would look at the application.

Residential amenity – was a planning issue and the planners would take this on board.

Pre-existing safety and congestion issues – we would not be able to refuse this as it was the lawful use of that site. The same with congestion at a junction if nothing could be done to improve it then they wouldn't be able to refuse,

Personal circumstances – they could not take personal circumstances into account.

Additional Responsibilities

Applicants went to them for Pre-Application advice, although they could not determine the application they did advise them on what they needed to do and what they needed to see as part of that application.



3. RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

The Resources Select Committee consisted of the following Members:

Councillor S Kane (Chairman)
Councillor A Patel (Vice Chairman)
Councillors N Bedford, T Boyce, D Dorrell, R Gadsby, R Jennings, P Keska, A Mitchell, C Roberts,
D Roberts, H Whitbread and Jon Whitehouse

The Lead Officer was Peter Maddock, Assistant Director Resources (Accountancy).

Terms of Reference

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of services and functions of the Resources Directorate, excluding those matters within remit of the Audit and Governance Committee, the Standards Committee or the Constitution Working Group;
2. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
3. To undertake quarterly performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Resources Directorate, though review of progress against adopted key performance indicators and other appropriate measures;
4. To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Resources Directorate requiring in-depth scrutiny, for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To respond to applicable consultations as appropriate;

Finance

7. To consider the draft directorate budgets for each year, and to evaluate and rank proposals for enhancing or reducing services where necessary, whilst ensuring consistency between policy objectives and financial demands;
8. To review key areas of income and expenditure for each directorate on a quarterly basis throughout the year;

Information and Communications Technology

9. To monitor and review progress on the implementation of all major ICT systems;

Value For Money

10. To consider the Council's comparative value for money 'performance', and to recommend as required to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee, in respect of areas where further detailed investigation may be required;

Human Resources

11. To monitor and review areas of concern or significance that comes under Human Resources.

The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:

(i) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/16 – (Outturn) Position – At their first meeting of the year the Committee received a report on the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16, the quarter 4 outturn position for that year. They noted that 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.

13 actions fell within the areas of responsibility of the Resources Select Committee. At the end of the year:

- 11 (85%) of these actions have been achieved; and
- 2 (15%) of these actions have not been achieved.

The Committee considered in detail the two actions that had not been achieved and were behind schedule.

(ii) Sickness Absence Outturn Report 2015/16 - Also at their July meeting the Committee received the outturn report for the sickness absence levels for 2015/16.



During Q3, 3.7% of employees met the trigger levels or above, 27.9% had sickness absence but did not meet the triggers and 68.4% had no absence. During Q4, 4% of employees met the trigger levels or above, 35% had sickness absence but did not meet the trigger levels and 61% had no absence.

The average number of days taken as sickness absence across all sectors was 8.3 days. In public services the figure was 9.3 days and 7.4 days in the private sector. In local government the figure was an average of 8 days. Last year the Council's outturn figure was 9.2 days. The Council's outturn figure of 7.99 days was now just below the local government average and 0.5 above the private sector.

Figures were also now split into work related stress and non-work related stress. The council has put a training programme in place to provide workshops for managers on mental health issues and over the last year there had been a decrease of 29% in the number of days lost due to mental health issues compared to the year before.

(iii) Energy Savings and Improved Management Process - The Committee noted the report updating them on the energy savings and improved management processes. They noted that the Council's energy consultants, Smith Bellerby (SB), were now dealing with all aspects of the energy billing and monitoring process on behalf of EFDC. Officers were extremely happy with the services provided. Since the start of the contract in May 2015, savings of £31,000 had been made, mainly by identifying both major billing errors and by transferring supplies on high rate tariffs to preferential low rate tariffs on the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Frameworks.

Monitoring of all energy bills had identified frequent large billing errors from suppliers. Last financial year SB had dealt with 52 major queries on our behalf. These queries were often complex and extremely time consuming.



It was noted that the majority of one-off savings had now been identified but that the staff resourcing savings would more than cover the SB annual charge. The charge for the financial year 2017/18 would be reduced to £22,587.

(iv) Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 (Outturn) Performance - The aim of the KPIs was to direct improvement effort towards services and the national priorities and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district.

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; although
- (c) 1 (3 %) of these KPIs performed within its tolerated amber margin.

Nine of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Resources Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these indicators, was as follows:

- (a) 8 (89%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 1 (11%) indicator did not achieve target.



(v) Provisional Capital Outturn 2015/16 - The Senior Accountant took the Committee through the report on the provisional capital outturn for 2015/16, in terms of expenditure and financing compared with the revised estimates.

The Committee noted that:

- The Council's total investment on capital schemes and capital funded schemes in 2015/16 was £37,298,000 compared to a revised estimate of £49,917,000, representing an underspend of 25%;
- Within the Resources Directorate, there were two large underspends of £306,000 and £151,000 on the planned maintenance programme and the upgrade of the industrial units at Oakwood Hill respectively;
- Of the 27 projects scheduled to be undertaken within the Council's planned maintenance programme, 14 were fully completed or nearly completed at a cost of £856,000;
- The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Programme progressed very well and 15 schemes were completed successfully in 2015/16.
- Progress on the new Shopping Park at Langston Road has been delayed, partly due to the need to re-tender the contract for the main construction works, and partly due to hold ups on the Section 278 highways work as a result of some very restrictive traffic management constraints imposed by Essex County Council after the tenders were submitted;
- Although the construction of the new depot at Oakwood Hill had progressed well since it started last September, some slippage had been experienced on this scheme;
- The major investment within the Communities Directorate had been the extension and refurbishment of the Council's museum;
- The approved HRA capital budget for 2015/16 was increased compared to previous years to

- provide for the Council's housebuilding programme; and
- Although the total value of loans made to individuals to improve private housing stock was lower than anticipated, demand increased in 2015/16 to £119,000 compared to £65,000 the previous year. Given the upward trend, it was recommended that the £41,000 underspend was carried forward to 2016/17.

(vi) Provisional Revenue Outturn 2015/16 - The Senior Accountant introduced the provisional Revenue Outturn Report for 2015/16. The report provided an overall summary of the revenue outturn for the financial year 2015/16. The General Fund saw £347,000 more than estimated being used from the opening balance, which was more than outweighed by the use of the District Development Fund being £1.1 million less than estimated. Overall the total net expenditure on the General Fund was £16.1 million, some £669,000 lower than the revised estimate.

Similarly, the position on the Housing Revenue Account was £716,000 better than anticipated.

(vii) Corporate Plan Action Plan Progress Quarterly Progress – the Select Committee received quarterly updates on the Council's corporate action plan pertaining to their area of responsibility.

(viii) Key Performance Indicators - Quarterly Progress – the Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(ix) Quarterly Financial Monitoring - The Committee received quarterly Financial Monitoring reports providing a comparison between the original estimate for the quarterly periods and the actual expenditure or income as applicable.

The Committee had within its terms of reference to consider financial monitoring reports on key areas of income and expenditure.

(x) Medium Term Financial Strategy and Finance Issues Papers – In October 2016 the Committee received a report that provided a framework for the 2017/18 Budget and updated Members on a number of financial issues that would affect this Authority in the short to medium term.

The meeting noted that in broad terms the following represented the greatest areas of current financial uncertainty and risk to the Authority:

- Central Government Funding
- Business Rates Retention
- Welfare Reform
- New Homes Bonus
- Development Opportunities
- Transformation
- Waste and Leisure Contracts
- Miscellaneous, including recession/income streams and pension valuation

The meeting noted that because of Brexit politicians and the Civil Service appeared to have been paralysed and so we knew little more than we did in February about changes to New Homes Bonus, the 100% retention of business rates or the financial contribution we would be required to make to support right to buy for housing association tenants. Given this position the report stated that there was little point updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for anything other than the 2015/16 outturn and so it was similar to the one approved in February.

(xi) Fees and Charges 2017/18 – This was a report on the proposed fees and charges that the Council should levy in 2017/18 and what scope there was to increase particular charges. It was noted that a saving of £250,000 in the Council’s budget would be required in 2017/18, but the scope for increasing income as a result of increasing fees and charges was relatively limited as regards the General Fund though less so with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The use of labour rate inflation as a guide was adopted last year on the basis that the most significant element of the cost involved in generating fees was staff salaries. The latest figure was 2.1% so adopting a figure of 2.0% was proposed.



It was noted that The Limes Centre makes a number of charges and that it was being proposed that around 5% be added to each of the charges for this facility. Based on recent, sample testing of other similar facilities in the area, it had been identified that the current pricing scale for the Limes Centre was significantly lower than several others and that there had also been an issue of people from outside the district, booking the facilities under the name of EFDC tenants and therefore taking advantage of the 50% tenant discount on hall hire fees.

It was also noted that waste management charges on bulky household waste were going up by 1.5% to 2%.

After due consideration, the proposals for the level of fees and charges for 2017/18 were agreed by the Committee.

(xii) Sickness Absence 2016/17 – The Committee received the half yearly report on the Council’s absence figures for Quarters 1 and 2 for 2016/17. It included absences figures by Directorate, the number of employees who had met the trigger levels and those who had more than 4 weeks absence and the reasons for the absence.



The Council’s target for sickness absence under RES001 for 2016/2017 was an average of 7.5 days per employee. The outturn figure for the two quarters was an average of 2.98 days, which was below the target of 3.64 days.

(xiii) Invest to Save Update - The meeting noted that in setting the budget for 2015/16 Council decided that, as the balance on the General Fund Reserve exceeded the minimum requirement and further savings were required; £0.5 million should be transferred from the General Fund Reserve into an Invest to Save earmarked reserve. This was subsequently topped up with an additional £154,000 during the current year. It was intended that this earmarked reserve would be used to finance schemes that would reduce the Continuing Services Budget (CSB) in future years.

Prior to the approval of the 2016/17 budget by Council in February 2016 a total of six schemes had been approved for Invest to Save funding and £309,000 of the fund balance of £500,000 had been allocated. A further three allocations were made by the March and April Cabinet meetings, which included the accommodation review and work on the future funding and structure of the museums service, these reduced the balance of unallocated funds to £92,000. As the fund had proved useful in generating savings schemes, Members agreed a top up of £154,000 in closing the 2015/16 accounts.



The most recent business cases were considered by the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee in June and approval was

given for some capital works at North Weald Airfield to extend a vehicle compound. A structural survey of the current main reception area and a programme management system for prototype activities were also approved.

(xiv) Draft General Fund CSB, DDF and ITS Lists and Savings Up date – In December 2016 the Committee received an update on budget preparation work. The report provided the first draft of the Continuing Services Budget (CSB), District Development Fund (DDF) and Invest to Save (ITS) Schedules for 2017/18.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which forms part of the Financial Issues Paper, identified that savings of around £500,000 were required over the forecast period. The savings required in 2017/18 were identified at £250,000 after savings of £464,000 already identified had been taken into account.



The total CSB expenditure in 2015/16 was £2.9 million higher than the Original budget, but this was entirely down to the decision to fund Capital Expenditure of £3 million from the General Fund balance. This decision was made because of the significant General Fund balance held by the Council and the comments made by Central Government around 'excessive' balances held by local authorities. There were as ever salary savings due to vacancies and this trend had continued into 2016/17.

Of the one off items the biggest was the Local Plan to be completed in 2018, and this would be at a cost of £1.2 million over the original budget.

There were a number of areas where further work was required before figures to be included within the budget could be finalised. Clearly the emphasis in this budget cycle will again need to be on CSB savings rather than growth but there were some areas where growth was inevitable. The figures generally need to be viewed in the context of this being quite early in the budget preparation process and will clearly need to be revisited as the budget came together.

(xv) Review of Section 106 Monies - The report was a review of usage of Section 106 monies. The report provided information on the Section 106 process and monitoring arrangements. These monies could be provided for a variety of different purposes and would be based upon requirements identified as part of the planning process. The types of project can range from education, highways, leisure, health and affordable housing provision.

The Section 106 agreements themselves could vary; most had financial requirements but some had non-financial requirements.

An officer group monitors Section 106 agreements on a quarterly basis, monitoring progress on all agreements ensuring that funds were applied to the appropriate projects and spent within the agreed timescale.

(See Case Study for full details)

(xvi) Insurance Claims Statistics – In February 2017 the Risk Management and Insurance Officer, introduced the report on Insurance Claims Statistics. The statistics were for 2011/12 to 2015/16. The Council's insurance cover was provided by Zurich Municipal. All the insurance claims shown directly affected the Council but did not include policies that were recharged. They showed claims for the fleet vehicles over this period and it was noted that EFDC drivers only had 10 claims, the rest were when we were hit by other drivers.



(xvii) Benefits Fraud and Compliance Update - The Assistant Director Benefits, introduced the report updating members on the work being undertaken to combat both Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support fraud and compliance.

The Committee noted that the Housing Benefit fraud investigation ceased to be the responsibility of the Council from 1 October 2015. The existing Investigation Officers at that time were transferred to the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS), part of the Department for Work and Pensions. The Council however, still remained responsible for the verification and checking of Housing Benefit applications. Local Council Tax Support was the Council's own scheme and therefore the Council remained responsible for Local Council Tax Support fraud and compliance.

(xviii) Cost of Members and Corporate Services – a report provided information on the cost of Member and Corporate Services, how it was calculated and what was the definition of these services. The two areas that this report was concerned with was Corporate Management which was made up of two cost centres and Member Activities which was made up of six cost centres. The former fell within the Office of the Chief Executive budgets and the latter, Governance.

Corporate Management sometimes referred to as Corporate Policy Making was the cost of managing the authority as a whole and includes the cost of the Chief Executive, management board meetings, production of the accounts, external audit, cost of maintaining a corporate bank account and a number of other similar costs. There was a popular misconception that a service area that provides support to all areas of the Council was a charge to Corporate Management, this was not the case as the definition was rather more narrow than that and the costs of these functions should be apportioned out to all Council services.

Member activities were sometimes referred to as Democratic Representation and as the name suggested was concerned with the cost to the authority of having elected members. It included Members Allowances, the holding of committee meetings and provision of agendas, the cost of attendance at external meetings where the member was representing the Council, officer advice to members and the provision of member admin services.

As regards the total cost of both of these services the HRA should bear a proportion of the cost as members and officers carrying out this work clearly make decisions that affect both the HRA and General Fund.

(xix) Information and Communication Technology Update – at their Mach 2017 meeting the Assistant Director (ICT & Facilities Management), introduced the report on the progress of projects within the ICT strategy. Last year 91% of projects were completed on time. This year had seen ICT concentrating on strengthening the resilience of both systems and infrastructure with a number of key systems being out hosted.

In the near future, most software products will only be available via subscription payments. Historically, software had been purchased outright from capital but this change in supplier behaviour would necessitate a switch to revenue expenditure.

(xx) Telephone Monitoring Statistics - the report on the monitoring statistics covered the period April 2016 to January 2017. The Committee noted that from 1 April 2016 to 31 January 2017 there were 27,210 calls on average per month to the Council of which 4.6% were abandoned and 7.2% went to voicemail. In the last year the number of calls had dropped by 3,000 per month from the year before, mainly due to the stabilisation of the waste contract. Abandoned calls had dropped from 7.9% to 4.6%.



It was noted that the Head of Customer Services was now in place and the restructuring of some customer facing services had commenced.

Consequently, the telephone workgroups currently reported on were unlikely to remain in their existing design from April 2017. It was anticipated that the next telephone monitoring statistics report to the Resources Select Committee would explain these changes and suggest alternatives to the current reporting format.

(xxi) Agency Staff and Consultancy – the Select Committee considered the report on the cost of consultants and agency staff for 2015/16 and to the end of February 2017. The Council on occasions needed to employ people either on a temporary basis or for a particular project. The former situation could be for peaks in workload or to cover maternity or long term sickness. The latter was for short term specific projects when the expertise did not exist in house and to employ someone for such a short term was impractical.

Such expenditure was recorded on the Council's finance system such that it was easily identifiable. However a reasonableness check has also been carried out to make sure that as far as possible the amounts recorded meet either the definition of an Agency worker or a consultant.

From the new tax year there were new arrangements regarding the accounting for tax and national insurance that may apply to some of our contracts. Information was given on what these changes were and how it was established whether a particular contract was affected by the changes. The legislation was referred to as Intermediaries Legislation (IR35).



From the 6 April 2017 the public sector will have responsibility for deciding whether an individual who was personally providing a service falls in or out of scope of IR35; and in certain circumstances liable for deducting tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) at source. Before this, this responsibility fell to the individual themselves.

(xxii) Transformation Programme – PICK Form – on 10 April 2017 the Committee held a special meeting. This meeting was called to establish the baseline for the scrutiny of the Council's Transformation Programme as proposed by the PICK form considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 28 February 2017. The O&S Committee agreed that the Resources Select Committee should be tasked with this scrutiny.



The Chairman of the Resources Select Committee had agreed to start with a one item special meeting to further explore the best approach and to establish an appropriate way forward.



The Head of Transformation, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council were invited to give a brief outline of the programme. All council members were invited via the Council Bulletin, as were the staff representatives on the Joint Consultative Committee.

The Chairman summed up the meeting, saying that they would like to scrutinise the Programme Management Board and the High Risks Projects that had been identified. He noted that the medium level ones went to the various Select Committees anyway.

It was also agreed that a Task and Finish Panel be set up and once set up should 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.

The Task and Finish Panel should also be mindful of having a clear end date to complete their work on.

Case Study – Review of Section 106 Monies

At their December 2016 meeting the Committee received a report on the review and usage of Section 106 monies. The report provided information on the Section 106 process and monitoring arrangements. These monies could be provided for a variety of different purposes and would be based upon requirements identified as part of the planning process. The types of project could range from education, highways, leisure, health and affordable housing provision.

They noted that if a developer was developing land for housing purposes there was a requirement in most cases, where there was a development of 15 or more properties, to provide 40% affordable housing on site. Sometimes however this was not viable and the Council would accept a financial contribution to provide affordable housing in the area. Prior to the house building programme this money was used by the General Fund and passed to housing associations, however this money was currently being used by the HRA.

The Section 106 agreements themselves could vary; most have financial requirements but some had non-financial requirements. Sometimes at the developers behest a repayment clause would be included where the money had to be spent for the agreed purpose within a specific timescale. If this timescale was not met the money becomes repayable and the provider would be entitled to apply for the money to be returned to them. As an example on occasions funding has been provided for highways works and the County Council has struggled to spend the money as no clear project was identified during the planning approval process.

An officer group monitors Section 106 agreements on a quarterly basis, monitoring progress on all agreements ensuring that funds were applied to the appropriate projects and spent within the agreed timescale. There have been 113 Section 106 agreements entered into since 2001 and whilst the early ones had been concluded there was still a significant number that had obligations outstanding and some went back a number of years.



As at 31st March 2016 the Council held £363,000 in various section 106 contributions; this was a considerable reduction on the previous year as all affordable housing monies including those provided during 2015/16 were spent on the Council's house building programme in that year. The amount was made up of £248,000 related to leisure initiatives and the remaining £115,000 was due and subsequently paid to NHS England or parish council's.

It was possible that Section 106 agreements would be replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy or CIL. This was being evaluated as part the Local Plan process by a consultant who was doing the groundwork to assess whether or not we should put a CIL in place, however we will not be able to do this until the Local Plan had been adopted, currently expected by the end of 2018.

4. NEIGHBOURHOODS SELECT COMMITTEE

The Neighbourhoods Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor N Bedford (Chairman)
Councillor H Brady (Vice Chairman)
Councillors N Avey, R Baldwin, L Hughes, J Jennings, R Morgan, S Neville, A Patel, C P Pond, B Rolfe, M Sartin, G Shiell, E Webster and J H Whitehouse

The Lead officer was Derek Macnab, Director of Neighbourhoods and Deputy Chief Executive.

Terms of Reference

General

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of services and functions of the Neighbourhood Directorate and excluding those matters within the remit of the Audit and Governance Committee, the Standards Committee or the Constitution Working Group;
2. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
3. To keep under review:
 - (i) *Environmental enforcement activities;*
 - (ii) *Waste management activities; and*
 - (iii) *Leisure Management*
 - (iv) *Local Plan Scrutiny*
4. To respond to applicable external consultations as appropriate;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Neighbourhoods Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary;

Performance Monitoring

7. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Neighbourhoods Directorate, against adopted Key Performance Indicators and identified areas of concern;

Environment

8. To monitor and keep under review the Council's progress towards the development and adoption of a corporate energy strategy / environmental policy and to receive progress reports from the Green Working Party.

9. To receive reports from the Waste Management Partnership Board in respect of the operation of and performance of the waste management contract;

Leisure

10. To monitor and keep under review leisure management matters and in particular the procurement of the Leisure Management Contract.

The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:

(i) Regular Updates on the Local Plan – Throughout the year the Committee received regular updates on the development of the Council's Local Plan when they received reports from the officer in charge and had the chance to scrutinise the progress made and identify any obstacles that were encountered.

(ii) Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 - Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance – in June 2016 the Committee considered the quarter 4 outturn report for the Key Performance Indicators for the previous year (2015/16). The Committee noted that 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 was monitored on a quarterly basis by Management Board and Overview and Scrutiny to drive improvement in performance and ensure corrective action was taken where necessary.

Twelve of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Neighbourhoods Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these indicators, was as follows:

- (a) 7 (58%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 5 (42%) indicators did not achieve target; although
- (c) 1 (8%) indicator performed within its tolerated amber margin.

The committee went on to review each indicator that looked to be not on target and to question any inconsistencies that they came across.

(iii) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Position – Again in June 2016 the Committee received a report on the quarter 4 outturn position of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2015/16. 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 are supported by Key Objectives, which provided a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for these five years.

20 actions fell within the areas of responsibility of the Neighbourhoods Select Committee. At the end of the year:

- 11 (55%) of these actions had been achieved; and
- 9 (45%) of these actions had not been achieved by year end.

(iv) Environmental Charter Objectives - The report on the Council's Environmental Charter and objectives was introduced by the Environmental Co-ordinator. In November 2015 the Neighbourhood and Community Services Select Committee had agreed that a draft environmental

charter and action plan should be developed to replace the existing Climate Change Policy. It was further agreed that it should be brought back to the Select Committee for comment and agreement.



The outcome of these discussions was considered at the Green Working Party (GWP) on 7 December 2016 when it was agreed that the charter and action plan should be modelled on the 'Climate Local' methodology. This looks at various environmental commitments for a local authority and breaks them down into broad areas, such as Finance, Energy, the Natural Environment, etc. Within each area, suggestions are made for environmental commitments and associated actions. These documents now follow the format of Climate Local methodology but have been tailored to EFDC requirements.

The Environmental Charter was an overarching document to explain what we as EFDC (and the GWP) feel are our main commitments to the environment as the area leader.

The 'Commitments and Actions' was a document to demonstrate ways in which we were fulfilling our Charter. It was broken into three main headings with broad actions under each heading. The broad actions will then be supported by specific actions from the GWP work plan. Once actions have been completed they can be added to this document as a record of what has been achieved. In this way the work plan can be the "working document" which changes; supporting the overall commitments and actions document.

(v) Consultation Report on M11 Junction 7a and Widening of Gilden Way - The Committee received a report on the ECC consultation on the M11 junction 7A (and widening of Gilden Way). They noted that Essex County Council was currently consulting on the provision and design of a new junction 7A on the M11, and the related widening of Gilden Way. This consultation followed several years of work by the County Council in assessing various options to improve congestion, and also in assessing possibilities for junction 7A design and location. A number of exhibitions would be going around the district.



The project also creates a spur going nowhere at present. This was to future proof the scheme but officers were unconvinced about this spur on the consultation. EFDC Members have previously raised concerns over the timing of the 'future-proofing' spur and roundabout which form part of Essex County Council's proposals. It was suggested that the Council included these concerns in its response, suggesting to Essex County Council that the phasing of delivery for these elements would need to be determined by the individual Districts' Local Plans, which were not yet available.

(vi) The Surface Water Management Plan for Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois – In September 2016 the Select Committee received a presentation on the surface water management for Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois from officers from Essex County Council and Capita.

Officers from the Council's Engineering, Drainage and Water Team had been working with Essex County Council's Flood Team, consultants and other stakeholders in producing a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) for Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois. The plan outlined the predicted risk and preferred surface water management strategy for these areas. Surface water flooding described flooding from sewers, drains, groundwater and run off from land, small watercourses and ditches that occurred as a result of heavy rainfall.

(See Case Study for details)

(vii) Fly Tipping – Enforcement and Clearance - The select committee received a verbal update on the Enforcement and Clearance of Fly Tipping from the Environment and Neighbourhoods Manager.

There were two main issues facing the authority in respect of fly tipping; the first was small scale disposal, often involving a single black rubbish bag and could be put down to miss-management. The second was large scale fly tipping which was frequently associated with professional tippers who worked for profit, this was a criminal activity that was hard to tackle and difficult to catch those responsible.

The solution was to attempt a reduction in fly tipping using enforcement signs, education and fines. Signs or notices could be stuck to black bags. The Environment Agency only took on the largest cases which meant that this authority handled a great deal, probably 99% of all cases.

There had been recent changes in Government legislation including Fixed Penalty Notices which could impose £200 fines. The income from this could be used by local authorities. The enforcement technology was also improving, CCTV was one example.



(viii) Key performance Indicators 2016/17 Quarterly Performance - The Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(ix) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17 – Quarterly Performance - The Select Committee received quarterly updates on the Council's corporate action plan pertaining to their area of responsibility.

(x) Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan – The Select Committee considered the Council's response to the Draft Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan. It needed to be broadly in conformity with the Council's own Local Plan and had to meet certain basic conditions.

Chigwell Parish Council had published its Draft Neighbourhood Plan for a period of formal public consultation.

The examination process was 'light touch' and considered a limited number of matters. However, in order to pass examination a Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the basic conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The plan met the basic conditions if:

- a) Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it was appropriate to make the plan;
- b) The making of the plan contributes to sustainable development;
- c) The making of the plan was in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area); and
- d) The making of the plan did not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations and human rights requirements.

(xi) Environmental Charter and Objectives – In November 2016 the meeting reviewed the report updating them on the progress of the Environmental Charter. It was noted that the development of an Environmental Charter and associated action plan was added to the Green Working Party's (GWP) work programme. Over a period of months the GWP developed the Charter

and associated 'commitments and actions' and these were agreed by the Select Committee at its meeting on 28 June. The Select Committee recommended the Charter to the Cabinet and asked to receive an annual report on the progress of the Charter against its action plan.

(xii) Response to the Government's Housing White Paper – At their last meeting of the year the Interim Assistant Director (Forward Planning) introduced the report on the government's consultation on the Housing White paper. The White Paper provided an analysis of the issues and challenges facing both the delivery of and access to housing. The document comprised a range of 'proposals' which were the subject of consultation and issues on which it was seeking comment.

The White Paper covered four key areas:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places;
- Building homes faster;
- Diversifying the market; and
- Helping people now.

At that stage many of the proposals carried no firm commitment to implement, as drafted. They would be considered further having reviewed the responses made to this consultation. Some proposals would require changes to regulation, whilst some would require amendments to national policy, including to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Committee went through the proposed draft response to the Housing White Paper, noting that:



small sites were to be treated positively; that local planning authorities were to determine what their Green Belt policy was; the Green Belt review to look at brown field sites; the 20% increase in fees for planning applications (now agreed by the Cabinet); and Section 106 restrictions to be removed.

Case Study: The Surface Water Management Plan for Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois

In September 2016 the Select Committee received a presentation on the surface water management for Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois from L Shepherd of Essex County Council and C Despina from Capita.



Officers from the Council's Engineering, Drainage and Water Team had been working with Essex County Council's Flood Team, consultants and other stakeholders in producing a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) for Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois. The plan outlined the predicted risk and preferred surface water management strategy for these areas. Surface water flooding described flooding from sewers, drains, groundwater and run off from land, small watercourses and ditches that occurred as

a result of heavy rainfall.

A four phase approach had been undertaken in line with Defra's SWMP technical guidance for 2010. The areas identified as being at significant risk had been placed into Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) of which a total of seven CDAs had been identified. For each site, specific measures had been identified that could be considered in helping reduce the risk of surface water flooding. The process established a long term action plan for the County Council, District Council and other flood management authorities to assist in their roles under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

These areas were the first within Epping District subject to a SWMP, because:

(a) Defra's National Rank Order of Settlements Susceptible to Surface water Flooding indicated that Loughton was vulnerable to surface water flooding and was ranked 313th out of 4,215 settlements in England with an estimated 1,000 at risk of flooding. The Defra document did not contain any information regarding the vulnerability or floodrisk for Buckhurst Hill or Theydon Bois, but due to historical flooding events it was decided to assess these areas as part of the SWMP; and

(b) As part of its duties created by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the County Council produced in January 2011 a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment which identified the Loughton area as a Tier 1 at risk area.

The Select Committee were advised of the potential options in dealing with flooding:

(a) Soft Measures

- (i) Adaptation of spatial planning policy
- (ii) Improving maintenance of the drainage network
- (iii) Emergency planning
- (iv) Raising community awareness

(b) Hard Engineering Measures

- (i) Ponds
- (ii) Pipe enlargement
- (iii) Additional gullies

(c) Sustainable Drainage Systems

- (i) Bioretention (The process in which contaminants and sedimentation were removed from stormwater run off. Stormwater was then collected into the treatment area)
- (ii) Green roofs (A roof partially or completely covered with vegetation)
- (iii) Permeable Pavement (Was a range of sustainable materials that allowed the movement of stormwater through the water)
- (iv) Detention Basins An excavated area installed on or adjacent to rivers, streams and the like for protection against flooding)
- (v) Rainwater Harvesting (The accumulation and deposition of rainwater for re-use on site, rather than allowing it to run off)
- (vi) Sub-Surface Storage (This relied on construction of water storage structure made of concrete or piping)

The Select Committee asked the invited speakers about the various options for coping with flooding. Members were concerned about the role of Essex County Council Highways in supporting better flood preparation. A meeting had been undertaken with County Highways considering changing maintenance regimes on their assets. Whilst the attitude from Highways was positive, it was clear that their current funding and prioritisation gave limited focus to their own drainage assets. The

working relationship the District Council had with the Drainage Engineer at Highways was extremely good.

The ECC and the Capita officers advised other problems they faced:

- Encouraging eligible residents to consider applying for Property Level Protection Grants that were available from ECC to install flood protection products, however properties must have been flooded previously to receive this.
- Continuing exploration of investment opportunities for drainage assets offered by developments that may come forward within the SWMP area, both pre and post adoption of the new Local Plan.
- Challenging drainage proposals where developers had not considered or embraced the range of sustainable drainage systems available.
- Working to ensure that Members and the wider public were aware of flood risk from all sources and how they could better prepare in the event of flooding.
- The Select Committee were advised that it was important building flood resilience into buildings, for example flooring that could be used after a flood.

Members were concerned about blockages in the River Roding which were not being cleared. Essex County Council replied that they had a very good relationship with the Environment Agency, however maintenance budgets had been cut, it was important to justify the benefits of work in line with costs sustained.

There was particular concern about flooding in the Theydon Bois, affecting 31 properties. Essex County Council replied that it was difficult to assess options and deciding what would work. They would look at properties potentially affected, there were resources available. It was important to inform people and help with preparation.



Report to Council

Date of meeting: 27 July 2017

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council

**Contact for further information: Councillor M Sartin
(Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, ext.4246



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from April 2017 to the present be noted.

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 18 April 2017

1. At our meeting on Tuesday 18th April, we received a question from a member of the public, concerning the recent hand over of the contract for the management of the District's Leisure Centres. He was given a response at the meeting and his supplementary question would be answered by the Leisure Portfolio holder in a comprehensive written reply.
2. We also agreed to the co-option of two youth councillors to the Communities Select Committee for the coming year. Councillor Knight, the Chairman of the Communities Select Committee 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 and she would like more members of the youth council to become future members of this council.
3. The committee also considered the forward plan of key decisions and the upcoming scrutiny of the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) NHS Trust who would be attending our next meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 6th June 2017

4. At our meeting on Tuesday 6th June, we received three members from the Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust. They were the Chief Executive, Lance McCarthy; their Chief Operating Officer, Stephanie Lawton; and their Chief Nurse, Nancy Fontaine. They give us a run through of the measure they have put in place since their unfavourable report from the CQC. We then conducted a question and answer session with them. The officers from PAH had received advanced notice of the topics and questions, split into operational and strategic issues, that the Committee wanted to cover, and as a result had come with prepared answers; they went on to answer, as best they could, any questions that were generated on the night from the members present. This exercise proved very productive and provided interesting and informative answers to many members' questions.

5. Also at this meeting we considered the Council's Corporate Priorities and Key Objectives for 2017/18. The Leader of the Council took us through this and answered any questions that we had. We then went on to consider the outturn of the position of the key action plan for 2016/17.

6. We then went on to consider and agree the four Select Committee's Terms of Reference and Work Programmes; reviewed and agreed the membership of the four Select Committees, and appointed their Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen. We then established the new Transformation Task and Finish Panel, agreed its terms of reference and appointed its membership and Chairman and Vice-chairman. I believe they held their first meeting on the 29th of June.

7. Finally, we then went on to consider and agree our O&S annual report for 2016/17 and this is in your agenda for tonight's Council meeting for information. On looking back on last year we were, as always, surprised and pleased at just how much work both in depth and breadth that we had undertaken over the past twelve months.

Report to the Council

Committee: **Audit & Governance** **Date:** 27 July 2017
Subject: **Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report 2016/17.**
Chairman: **Councillor J Knapman**

Recommending:

(1) That the Annual Report of the Audit & Governance Committee for 2016/17 be noted.

1. The Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee outlines the Committee's work and achievements over the year ending 31 March 2017. The Annual Report helps to demonstrate to residents and the Council's other stakeholders the vital role that is carried out by the Audit and Governance Committee and the contribution that it makes to the Council's overall governance arrangements.
2. The Annual Report is attached as an Appendix to this report, and we recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 2016/17

1. INTRODUCTION

The Audit Committee was established by the Council in July 2007. Its purpose is:

- to provide independent assurance to the Council in respect of the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, risk management framework and the associated control environment; and
- independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment.

Whilst there is no statutory obligation for a local authority to establish an audit committee, they are widely recognised internationally across the public and private sectors as a key component of effective governance. Similarly, it is considered good practice for the Committee to report annually to the Council on its work.

The key benefits of an effective audit committee are:

- increasing awareness regarding the effectiveness and continued development of the Council's governance arrangements;
- providing additional assurance on the robustness of the Council's governance arrangements through a process of independent and objective review;
- reducing the risks of illegal or improper acts;
- increasing public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting;
- contributing to performance improvements in assurance levels and awareness of the need for strong internal control including the implementation of audit recommendations; and
- reinforcing the importance and independence of internal and external audit and similar review processes.

2. ASSURANCE ACTIVITY 2016/17

To help the Committee draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the Council's internal control framework, governance and risk management it gained assurances from the following sources:

Internal Audit

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require the Council to maintain an adequate and effective internal audit which is discharged by the Director of Resources as Section 151 Officer. Internal Audit is a key source of assurance for both Members and management on the effectiveness of the control framework. The Committee has a responsibility for ensuring that Internal Audit is effective in the provision of this assurance.

The Committee considered and agreed reports regarding the Internal Audit Strategy, Terms of Reference and Annual Plan 2016/17, and progress by management in implementing audit recommendations. It also received regular progress reports on the performance of Internal Audit. These reports have helped in ensuring that reported weaknesses have either been addressed or the identified risks adequately mitigated by management and that there is an effective system of governance and internal control in place.

The Committee also kept under review the joint working arrangements with Harlow District Council and Broxbourne Borough Council, including audit resources to deliver the plan and benefits derived from the shared working. In February 2017 the Committee received the outcomes of the independent external quality assessment of the Internal Audit shared service against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The overall conclusion was Internal Audit complies with the PSIAS and continues to provide an effective and efficient service to each Council (Epping Forest, Harlow and Broxbourne).

Assurance Framework / Annual Governance Statement

The Committee's terms of reference include advising on the effectiveness of the Council's assurance framework including the production of the Annual Governance Statement.

During the year, the Committee has received reports on the control framework and how the annual review and assurance process is undertaken. The Assurance Framework is compiled from various sources of assurance, for instance Directors and other key officers.

The Chief Internal Auditor provides an annual report and opinion regarding the Council's control framework. This opinion is considered by the Committee alongside other sources of assurance.

The Committee reviewed the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2015/16 which identified governance issues requiring further ongoing improvement relating to:

- Procurement Rules;
- Corporate Policies; and
- Project Management.

The assurance framework remained unchanged during 2016/17 and the Council's Code of Corporate Governance was updated to ensure it was aligned to the 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE Framework - Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. The Committee was able to be satisfied that there is a robust assurance framework in place to safeguard the Council's resources through reliance on the annual review of the Council's system of internal control and the Chief Internal Auditor's annual opinion.

Anti-Fraud and Corruption

Countering fraud and corruption is the responsibility of every Member and officer of the Council. The Committee's role in this area has been to monitor and support the actions taken by officers to counter fraud, particularly with the setup of the Corporate Fraud Team, who work in tandem with Internal Audit.

The Committee receives reports and presentations on such work undertaken in the Council and proactive fraud work, for example participation in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI).

The Council continues to send out a strong message that fraud will not be tolerated and that where fraud is proven the strongest possible actions of redress will be taken.

Based on the work to date, coupled with no major incidences of fraud and corruption being highlighted by management, the Corporate Fraud Team or Internal Audit, the Committee concludes that there is a sound anti-fraud framework in place.

Risk Management

The Committee receives regular reports on risk management, including in March 2017 a report on the effectiveness of the arrangements for risk management highlighting the Council had continued its programme of risk management.

Treasury Management

In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Committee reviewed the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and considered the risks associated with the Council's treasury activity and how these are managed. The Committee also considered progress reports on the treasury management function and performance against prudential indicators.

Statement of Accounts and External Auditors

At its September meeting the Committee reviewed the Council's draft Statement of Accounts for 2015/16 before recommending for adoption by the Council.

During the year the Committee received a number of reports from the External Auditors (BDO) who attend each meeting. These reports include the Annual Governance Report 15/16, Annual Audit Letter 15/16, Audit Plan 16/17, Planning Letter 17/18 and Grant Claims and Returns of Certification for the year ending March 2016. When reviewing the reports the Committee considered audit risks highlighted by the External Auditors.

3. COMMITTEE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee has a rolling and flexible programme of work for its main areas of activity which is proactively reviewed and amended throughout the year to reflect changes in policies, priorities and risks. The Committee met five times in 2016/17. The Committee considered items which are presented annually, such as audit results, the statement of accounts, the annual governance statement, and audit plans; as well as a number of other items including treasury management as this falls under the committee's remit.

Training sessions have been held and the agreed work programme enables the Committee to provide an independent assurance to the Council as to the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment.

Members of the Committee have a wide range of both experience and professional knowledge which, coupled with it having two co-opted persons, has continued to help demonstrate its independence. The Committee has the benefit of being well supported by Council officers. This included the Director of Resources, who is also the Section 151 Officer, Director of Governance, who is also the Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Internal Auditor as well as the Council's external auditors.

To help ensure the effectiveness of the Committee, there is a training programme, comprising of formal training sessions, as well as the committee reports. This supplemented the corporate induction packs and training programme provided, particularly for new members to the Council. Ongoing training requirements are kept under review and opportunities for joint training with Harlow and Broxbourne Councils are actively sought.

In November 2017, with assistance from the Chief Internal Auditor, the committee undertook its own effectiveness review concluding the committee was able to demonstrate compliance with recommended best practice for an effective audit committee. This was coupled with a review of the Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference against the 2013 CIPFA model terms of reference, benchmarking with Broxbourne's and Harlow's Terms of Reference, and concluded they remain fit for purpose.

There have been no reported major breakdowns in internal control, governance and risk management that have led to a significant loss in one form or another, nor any major weakness in the governance systems that has exposed, or continues to expose, the Council to an unacceptable level of risk.

The purpose, strategy and work programme of the Committee mitigates against any major failure by the Council to obtain independent assurance in relation to the governance processes underpinning:

- An effective risk management framework and internal control environment including audit;
- The effectiveness of financial and non-financial performance (to the extent that it affects exposure to risk and poor internal control); and
- The compilation and consideration of the Annual Governance Statement.

Outcomes / Achievements

Through its work, the Committee's main outcome is in the additional assurance provided of the robustness of the Council's arrangements regarding corporate governance, risk management and internal controls.

The Committee has added value through its activity and in particular:

- it has continued to increase the importance placed upon governance issues, particularly risk management, anti-fraud and the assurances sought that key risks are being mitigated; and
- it has continued to raise the profile of internal control issues across the Council and to seek to ensure that audit recommendations are implemented.

Conclusions

The Committee's remit is achieved firstly through it being appropriately constituted, and secondly by the Committee being effective in ensuring internal accountability and the delivery of audit and a robust assurance framework. The Committee has received and challenged reports from management and both internal and external audit.

The agreed work programme enables the Committee to provide independent assurance to the Council as to the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment.

The Committee has continued to have a real and positive contribution to the governance arrangements of the Council. The Committee's key achievement is in the additional assurance provided of the robustness of the Council's arrangements regarding corporate governance, risk management and the control environment.

Looking Forward

The Committee has continued to work well and has considered a wide range of different topics relating to the Council's governance framework. It has continued to establish and develop its role, particularly in respect of ensuring that there are good risk assessment / management arrangements and good governance procedures in place.

Stricter internal control and the establishment of a Committee can never eliminate the risks of serious fraud, misconduct or misrepresentation of the financial position. However, the Committee will continue to raise awareness of the need for internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations as well as to maintain a watching brief on the areas highlighted in the Annual Governance Statement. In addition, through a process of independent and objective reviews, the Committee is best placed to provide an additional assurance as to the adequacy of the Council's overall governance arrangements.

The Committee has performed its duties as required under its terms of reference, contributing to an effective control framework. In order to build upon its achievements to date and to raise awareness of the work of the Committee during the coming year the Committee will focus on the following:

- Continue to review governance arrangements to ensure that the Council adopts best practice;
- Continue to support the work of audit and ensure that appropriate responses are provided to their recommendations;
- Continue to help the Council manage the risk of fraud and corruption;
- Provide effective challenge, particularly to officers, raising awareness of the importance of sound internal control arrangements and giving the appropriate assurances to the Council;
- Consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements.
- Provide existing and new members to the Committee with relevant training, briefings etc. to help in discharging their responsibilities.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Audit & Governance Committee

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy

Chairman: Councillor J Knapman

Recommending:

(1) That the revised Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, as attached at Appendix 1, be approved.

Report:

Background

1. The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy is an integral part of the Council's overall governance framework. It is designed to encourage prevention and promote detection of both fraud and corruption against the Council. The Strategy sets out the expectation that Members, employees, individuals and organisations will be honest and fair in any dealings they might have with the Council.

2. The Strategy was reviewed and updated taking into account the good practice set out in the 2016-19 Local Government Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy, being a national strategy aimed at those charged with governance in local authorities. It sets out the approach local authorities should take and the main areas of focus over the next three years in order to transform counter fraud and corruption performance, and contains major recommendations for local authorities and other stakeholders. It supersedes the last Fighting Fraud Locally Strategy which was published in 2011.

3. It is management's responsibility to take actions to mitigate fraud risks through expecting high standards of conduct and operating strong systems of internal control. Any loss through fraud and other irregularity is a drain on resources which, in turn, reduces the amounts available for service delivery and to support those in genuine need. It is equally important that those working for and with the Council have a clear understanding of the Council's standards and expectations through effective communication and monitoring.

Ongoing Review of the Council's Anti-Fraud Strategy and Counter Fraud Resource

4. The Council will need to keep under continuous review the threats from fraud, and to ensure it allocates resources to the highest identified areas of existing and emerging risks. There is always scope to continually improve in being responsive and adaptive to emerging risks and pressures. The Council needs to continue to monitor its mechanisms for assessing the risk of fraud and having the means to share information and quantify the outcome whenever fraud occurs.

5. The Audit and Governance Committee has a key role in assessing whether

the Council's framework for responding to the risk of fraud and corruption meets recommended practice and governance standards, and complies with legislation. It will continue to receive regular updates regarding fraud work within the Council, both reactive and proactive, to fulfil this role.

6. Once approved, the revised Strategy will be published on the Council's internet and intranet, and its message relayed to all staff via the staff newsletter District Lines. Training will be provided as appropriate through the Corporate Fraud Team Strategy so that awareness of roles and responsibilities is further cascaded to all staff.

Conclusion

7. The occurrence of fraud may expose the Council to financial loss and the substantive risks associated with an inadequate control framework. This strategy is vital to promoting a Council-wide awareness of anti-fraud and corruption activities and responsibilities. It will assist the Council with managing the risk of fraud and ensure a consistent response in the event of fraud being suspected.

8. The Strategy was considered by the Audit & Governance Committee at its meeting on 26 June 2017, where it was agreed and recommended to the Council for approval.

9. Following this meeting, some minor revisions to the Strategy were agreed by the Chairman, within the Fraud Response Plan section (pages 25-29), which were mostly concerned with how suspicions can be reported.

10. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy

May 2017



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Anti-Fraud Policy

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) is committed to high legal, ethical and moral standards, and the proper accountability of public funds.

The Authority will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from inside or outside the Authority.

The Authority's expectation of propriety and accountability is that Members and staff at all levels will lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices.

The Authority also expects that individuals and organisations with which it comes into contact will act towards the Authority with integrity.

The key controls in place to reduce the likelihood of fraud are:

- The Authority has an effective anti-fraud and corruption policy and maintains a culture that will not tolerate fraud or corruption
- All Members and staff act with integrity and lead by example
- Senior managers are required to deal swiftly and firmly with those who defraud or attempt to defraud the authority or who are corrupt
- High standards of conduct are promoted amongst Members by the standards committee
- The maintenance of a register of interests in which any hospitality or gifts accepted must be recorded
- Confidential reporting procedures are in place and operate effectively
- Legislation including the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is adhered to
- Standard contract clauses prohibit fraud and corruption

Additionally, the Authority:

- Maintains a Corporate Fraud Team who play a key role in both the prevention and investigation of matters relating to suspected fraud, corruption and abuse of council services and property.
- Uses the Internal Audit Service as an independent appraisal function for the review of the Council's internal control system as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources
- Recognises the importance of criminal prosecution in deterring fraud and will seek to prosecute offenders where appropriate
- Supports the work of the police and other external agencies in fighting fraud and corruption in the public sector.

- Is a member of the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN), and
- Participates in the National Fraud Initiative, which is the Cabinet Office's biennial data matching exercise designed to combat fraud.

This policy applies to suspected fraud and corruption, which concerns EFDC, involving employees, Members and/or external parties unless the matter is more properly a matter for the Police. Any investigation required will be conducted without regard to any person's relationship to EFDC, position or length of service.

Section One

Introduction

EFDC aims to provide community leadership and quality services. This strategy document embodies a series of measures designed to frustrate any attempted fraudulent or corrupt act and the steps to be taken if such an act occurs.

In applying this strategy regard will be had to all relevant EFDC policies and any obligations as an employer and the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) defines fraud and corruption as:

Fraud – *“the intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the authority which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain”*.

In addition, fraud can be defined as *“the intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the authority, which is carried out to mislead or misrepresent”*.

Corruption – *“the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence the action of any person”*.

The passing of The Fraud Act 2006 into legislation created specific criminal offences surrounding fraud.

They are:

- Fraud by False Representation
- Fraud by Failing to disclose Information (where there is a legal duty to do so)
- Fraud by Abuse of Position
- Possession of Articles for use in a fraud
- Making or Supplying articles for use in Fraud

This policy strongly advocates the following 4 key principles in the Council's approach to combatting fraud and corruption, namely:

- **Culture** – The ongoing process of maintaining and developing a “top to bottom” anti fraud and corruption culture throughout the organisation focusing not just on employees, but members, suppliers, contractors and the public also.
- **Prevention** – Ensuring that a range of anti-fraud measures are deployed throughout the Council such as internal audits, fraud awareness sessions etc.
- **Detection and Investigation** – Where fraud and / or corruption are suspected, the Council must ensure that investigations are carried out by professional and qualified investigators to the highest standards of fairness and probity, having due regard to the appropriate legislation at all times.
- **Deterrence** – In the event of fraud and / or corruption being discovered, the Council must take appropriate steps to ensure that further instances do not occur by utilising methods such as criminal prosecution, disciplinary action, etc. The Council will also seek to obtain financial redress where public money has been lost by utilising The Proceeds of Crime Act wherever appropriate.

Section Two

Culture

EFDC will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from inside or outside the authority. Fraud risk is considered as part of the Authority's overall risk management strategy.

The prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, and the protection of the public purse is everyone's responsibility.

The Members and employees play an important role in creating and maintaining this culture. They are positively encouraged to raise concerns regarding fraud and corruption, irrespective of seniority, rank or status, in the knowledge that such concerns will, wherever possible, be treated in confidence. In order to make sure this occurs; the Council has and maintains a separate Whistleblowing Policy.

Members, employees or contractors are encouraged to raise concerns (who with?) if they reasonably believe that one or more of the following has occurred, is in the process of occurring or is likely to occur:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with a statutory or legal obligation
- improper unauthorised use of public or other funds
- improper use or misappropriation of assets
- a miscarriage of justice
- maladministration, misconduct or malpractice
- any other similar occurrences
- deliberate concealment of any of the above.

Management Board will ensure that any allegations received in any way, including anonymous letters or phone calls, will be taken seriously and investigated in an appropriate manner, subject to legislative requirements.

The Council has agreed the provision of a Corporate Fraud Team in order to bring a uniform approach to fraud investigation and to adequately resource the detection and prevention of fraud.

The Corporate Fraud Team (CFT) now has the remit to investigate matters of suspected fraud, theft and corruption within EFDC (with the exception of Housing Benefit fraud investigation which transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions). The CFT will, as one of its key operating principles also seek to maintain an anti-fraud and corruption culture by engaging staff, members and the general public by way of fraud awareness sessions and seeking to publicise its successes both internally and externally.

EFDC will deal firmly with those who defraud the Authority, or who are corrupt, or who are responsible for financial malpractice.

When fraud or corruption has occurred because of a breakdown in the authority's systems or procedures, the Corporate Governance Group in conjunction with the Corporate Fraud Team and Internal Audit will ensure that appropriate improvements in systems of control are implemented to prevent a recurrence.

Section Three

Prevention

It is important that the Council recognises and manages the risks relating to fraud and corruption in order to prevent them from occurring. Furthermore, it is imperative that these risks are routinely considered as part of the Council's overall approach to risk management. In order to understand the nature of these risks, the following have been identified as key issues that are relevant to EFDC:

- Social Housing Tenancy Fraud – this includes risks such as fraudulent housing applications, mutual exchanges, illegal subletting etc.
- The Right to Buy scheme – fraudulent applications and suspected money laundering
- Money Laundering – Exposure to suspect transactions
- Council Tax – fraudulently claimed discounts (including Local Council Tax Support), refund scams
- Non-Domestic Rates – fraudulent applications for exemptions, unlisted properties
- Grants (including Disabled Facilities Grants) – false eligibility and applications, diverted funds, works not carried out.
- Insurance Fraud – suspected false claims particularly those relating to personal injury
- No recourse to public funds – fraudulent eligibility for Council services such as Social Housing
- Payroll Fraud – false and “ghost” employees, overtime and mileage claims, expenses.
- Internal Frauds – such as fund diversion, accepting bribes, stealing monies and / or Council property, social housing misallocations for personal gain, working elsewhere whilst off sick, abuse of position such as misuse of assets / resources.
- Procurement Fraud – tendering issues, split contracts, double invoicing
- Cyber Crime / Fraud – frauds such as false applications for services, fund diversion.

It is important to note that the above represents the key fraud risk areas and examples of each. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

As with the culture, the concept of fraud prevention applies to the organisation from top to bottom.

Members

As elected representatives, all Members of the Authority must act in accordance with statutory requirements and the Members' Code of Conduct. These matters and other guidance are specifically brought to the attention of Members at the induction course for new Members and include rules on the declaration and registration of potential areas of conflict between Members' Council duties and responsibilities, and any other areas of their personal or professional lives.

Members sign to the effect that they have read, understood and will comply with the Member's Code of Conduct when they take office. The Monitoring Officer advises Members of new legislative or procedural requirements.

Managers

Managers at all levels are responsible for the communication and implementation of this policy in their work area. They are also responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the Authority's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, and that the requirements of each are being met in their everyday business activities. In addition, managers must make sure their staff are aware of the requirements of the Officers' Code of Conduct through the induction process.

Managers are expected to strive to create an environment in which their staff feel able to approach them with any concerns they may have about suspected irregularities. Where they are unsure of the procedures, they must refer to the information in the Confidential Reporting Policy.

Special arrangements will apply where employees are responsible for cash handling or are in charge of financial systems and systems that generate payments, for example payroll, the integrated benefits computer system or council tax. Managers must ensure that relevant training is provided for staff. Checks must be carried out at least annually to ensure that proper procedures are being followed.

The Authority recognises that a key preventative measure in dealing with fraud and corruption is for managers to take effective steps at the recruitment stage to establish, as far as possible, the honesty and integrity of potential employees, whether for permanent, temporary or casual posts.

The Authority has a formal recruitment procedure, which contains appropriate safeguards on matters such as written references and verifying qualifications held.

As with other public bodies, police checks are undertaken on employees working with children.

Further checks will be introduced in areas where an increased risk of potential fraud and corruption has been identified (for example, positions whereby a professional qualification is essential).

The Assistant Director (Human Resources) will keep under review the checks that legislation allows.

Employees

Each employee is governed in their work by the Authority's Procurement Rules and Financial Regulations, the Officer Code of Conduct and various policies. Guidelines on gifts and hospitality, and codes of conduct associated with professional and personal conduct and disclosure of interests are contained within the Staff Handbook, which is available to all staff via the corporate intranet.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they follow the instructions given to them by management, particularly in relation to the safekeeping of the assets of the Authority. These will be included in induction training and procedure manuals. Employees are expected always to be aware of the possibility that fraud, corruption or theft may exist in the workplace and be able to share their concerns with management. If for any reason, they feel unable to speak to their manager, they can

relay their suspicions to either the Chief Internal Auditor or the Corporate Fraud Manager. Employees can also avail themselves of the Confidential Reporting Policy.

Conflicts of Interest

Both Members and employees must ensure that they avoid situations where there is a potential for a conflict of interests. Such situations can arise with externalisation of services, partnering arrangements, internal tendering, planning and land issues, etc. Effective role separation will ensure decisions made are, and are seen to be made, based upon impartial advice thereby avoiding improper disclosure of confidential information. As from 2017, the Performance Development Review process will require employees to annually confirm their position regarding any potential conflicts of interest.

Official Guidance

In addition to Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, Services will have their own procedures to prevent and detect fraud. There may also be audit reports that recommend methods to minimise losses to the Authority. Staff must be made aware of these various sources of guidance and alter their working practices accordingly.

Role of the Corporate Fraud Team

The Corporate Fraud Team role in both the prevention and investigation of instances of suspected fraud against the Council. Fraud awareness training is given to officers within the authority to assist in ensuring that any cases referred to the team contain good quality information to assist with the investigation. All investigations are carried out in accordance with the respective legislation..

In cases where the offence is deliberate and serious enough to warrant prosecution, consideration will be given to the Council's fraud prosecution / sanction policy. If deemed appropriate legal proceedings will be undertaken in conjunction with Legal Services and / or other bodies such as the Police.

Utilising the provisions of Section 222 of The Local Government Act 1972, the Corporate Fraud Team in conjunction with Legal Services are appropriately authorised to undertake investigations and criminal prosecutions into cases of fraud and corruption that involve the Council.

The Role of Internal Audit

Internal Audit plays a vital preventative role in trying to ensure that systems and procedures are in place to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. They liaise with management to recommend changes in procedures to prevent potential or further losses to the Authority. Internal Audit will also work closely in conjunction with the Corporate Fraud Team.

The Role of External Audit

Independent external audit is an essential safeguard in the stewardship of public money. This role is delivered through the carrying out of specific reviews that are designed to test (amongst other things) the adequacy of the Authority's financial systems, and arrangements for preventing and detecting fraud and corruption. It is not the external auditor's function to prevent fraud and irregularity, but the integrity of

public funds is at all times a matter of general concern. External auditors are always alert to the possibility of fraud and irregularity, and will act without undue delay if grounds for suspicion come to their notice. The external auditor has a responsibility to review the Authority's arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and irregularity, and arrangements designed to limit the opportunity for corrupt practices.

Co-operation with Others

The Corporate Fraud Team and Internal Audit have arranged (subject to legislative requirements regarding data sharing) and will keep under review procedures and arrangements to develop and encourage the exchange of information on national and local fraud and corruption activity in relation to local authorities with external agencies such as:

- Police
- County, Unitary and District groups
- External Audit
- Government departments
- National bodies such as The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, Action Fraud etc.

Section Four

Detection and Investigation

The Corporate Fraud Team and Internal Audit play an important role in the detection of fraud and corruption. Included in their respective business plans are reviews of system financial controls and specific fraud and corruption tests, spot checks and unannounced visits.

In addition to Internal Audit, there are numerous systems controls in place to deter fraud and corruption, but it is often the vigilance of employees and members of the public that aids detection.

In some cases, frauds are discovered by chance or 'tip-off' and arrangements are in place to deal with such information properly.

All suspected irregularities are required to be reported (orally or in writing) either by the person with whom the initial concern was raised or by the originator, as detailed in the Authority's Confidential Reporting Policy. This will:

- ensure the consistent treatment of information regarding fraud and corruption
- facilitate a proper and thorough investigation by an investigator from the Corporate Fraud Team in accordance with the requirements of current legislation. Should a member of the Corporate Fraud Team be implicated or the subject of an investigation, either the Chief Internal Auditor or Monitoring Officer will provide a suitable, qualified investigator.

This process will apply to all the following areas:

- a) fraud/corruption by Members
- b) fraud/corruption by Authority employees
- c) fraud/corruption by contractors' employees
- d) fraud/corruption by the public/ external parties

In most cases of reported fraud and / or corruption, any allegation or suspicion will, in the first instance be investigated by the Corporate Fraud Team. Depending on the nature of the case, the CFT may consider undertaking joint investigations with other relevant parties (such as other Local Authorities, Government Departments, the Police etc.).

Alternatively, the CFT may, in some cases, refer the investigation on to another investigating body if more appropriate to do so.

Any decision to refer a matter to the police will be taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, the s151 Officer, the Director of the responsible service and the Corporate Fraud Manager / Chief Internal Auditor however any investigation whereby financial impropriety is discovered, will be dealt with, normally, in the first instance by the Corporate Fraud Team. However, the mere fact that a Corporate Fraud Team and / or police investigation leads to them taking no further action will not compromise any private action/procedure or investigation that the Council may pursue.

The Authority's disciplinary procedure will be used to facilitate a thorough investigation of any allegation of improper behaviour by employees. Decisions to refer potential criminal activity by a Member to the Police will be taken by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive and s151 Officer.

If a member is suspected of the specific offence of failing to disclose a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as defined by the Localism Act 2011 the decision to refer the matter to the Police will be taken by the Monitoring Officer following an initial report by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Section Five

Deterrence

Criminal Prosecution

In order to strike the correct balance taking into account punishment and deterrence, the Council will undertake criminal prosecutions where it is considered evidentially appropriate and in the public interest. A corporate policy will be developed taking account of legal guidelines, to encompass the public, Members, contractors and employees. It is designed to clarify the Authority's action in specific cases and to deter others from committing offences against the authority. However, it also recognises that it may not always be in the public interest to refer cases for criminal proceedings and will seek to always take a fair and balanced view on each matter according to each case's particular merits.

Disciplinary Action

Theft, fraud and corruption are serious offences against the Authority and employees will face disciplinary action if there is evidence that they have been involved in these activities. Disciplinary action may be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner.

Members will face appropriate action under this strategy if they are found to have been involved in theft, fraud or corruption against the Authority. Action may be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner.

This aspect of the policy is to be read in conjunction with the powers of the Standards Committee, the delegated powers of the Monitoring Officer and deputy Monitoring Officer and the adopted Code of Conduct.

Publicity

The Council will optimise the publicity opportunities associated with anti-fraud and corruption activity within the Authority. As a matter of course, a press release will be drafted following any successful criminal prosecution and passed to PR in order for them to ensure that the results of any action taken, are reported positively in the media. This will be particularly relevant where a financial loss to the Council has occurred and any action taken to recover any such losses will also be promoted.

Provision will also be made for publicity to be taken for any such cases whereby details cannot be made public (for example: where Formal Cautions and / or financial penalties are utilised). In these cases, any press release will contain the pertinent details but will not identify individuals by name.

From time to time, the Council may be approached by the media such as television, radio etc. in order to provide content regarding anti-fraud and corruption activities. It is acknowledged that this type of media publicity can be extremely useful in promoting anti-fraud activities and as a tool for deterrence. Should such approaches be received, they are to be considered on a case by case basis with the involvement of both PR and Corporate Governance Group at the earliest opportunity.

All anti-fraud and corruption activities, including the update of this strategy, will be publicised in order to make employees and the public aware of the Authority's commitment to taking action on fraud and corruption when it occurs.

Regular reports will be made to the Audit and Governance Committee, about countering fraud and corruption activities and their success or otherwise.

Section Six

Bribery Act Policy

Objective of this policy

This policy provides a coherent and consistent framework to enable Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Members and employees to understand and implement arrangements enabling compliance. In conjunction with related policies and key documents it will also enable Members and employees to identify and effectively report a potential breach.

We require that Members and all staff, including those permanently employed, temporary agency staff and contractors:

- act honestly and with integrity at all times and safeguard the organisation's resources for which they are responsible
- comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the laws and regulations of all jurisdictions in which the Council operates, in respect of the lawful and responsible conduct of activities.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all of the Council's activities. For partners, joint ventures, agents and suppliers, we will seek to promote the adoption of policies consistent with the principles set out in this policy.

Within the Council, the responsibility to control the risk of bribery occurring resides at all levels of the Council. It does not rest solely within assurance functions, but in all business units and corporate functions.

This policy covers all staff, including all levels and grades, those permanently employed, temporary agency staff, contractors, agents, elected Councillors, co-opted members of the public, volunteers and consultants.

The Council's commitment to action

The Council commits to:

- Setting out a clear anti-bribery policy and keeping it up to date
- Making all Members and employees aware of their responsibilities to adhere strictly to this policy at all times
- Training all Members and employees so that they can recognise and avoid the use of bribery by themselves and others
- Encouraging its Members and employees to be vigilant and to report any suspicions of bribery, providing them with suitable channels of communication and ensuring sensitive information is treated appropriately
- Rigorously investigating instances of alleged bribery and assisting police and other appropriate authorities in any resultant prosecution

- Taking firm and vigorous action against any individual(s) involved in bribery
- Provide information to all Members and employees to report breaches and suspected breaches of this policy
- Include appropriate clauses in contracts to prevent bribery.

Facilitation payments

Facilitation payments are not tolerated and are illegal. Facilitation payments are unofficial payments made to public officials in order to secure or expedite actions.

Gifts and hospitality

This policy does not change the requirements of our gifts and hospitality policy. This makes it clear that:

Sample tokens of modest value bearing the name or insignia of the organisation giving them (for example, pens, diaries or calendars) whether given personally, or received in the post, may be retained unless they could be regarded as an inducement or reward. You should refuse the offer or invitation (or return the gift) unless your Service Director has advised you that it may be accepted or retained.

Public contracts and failure to prevent bribery

Under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (which gives effect to EU law in the UK), a company is automatically and perpetually debarred from competing for public contracts where it is convicted of a corruption offence or “the offence of bribery”.

Organisations that are convicted of “failing to prevent bribery” are not automatically barred from participating in tenders for public contracts.

The Council has the discretion to exclude organisations convicted of this offence.

Member and Staff responsibilities

All Members and staff are required to avoid activity that breaches this policy. The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery and other forms of corruption are the responsibility of all those working for the Council or under its control.

Members and staff must:

- ensure that they read, understand and comply with this policy
- raise concerns as soon as possible if they believe or suspect that a conflict with this policy has occurred, or may occur in the future.

Staff

- As well as the possibility of civil action and criminal prosecution, staff that breach this policy may face disciplinary action, which could result in summary dismissal for gross misconduct. Dismissal can still be an outcome with or without civil action or criminal prosecution.

Members

The Member Code of Conduct requires that where a Member acts as a representative of the authority he or she must not use or attempt to use their position as a Member improperly to confer on or secure for themselves or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage.

Allegations against a Member for breach will be routed through the Standards complaints process administered by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Raising a concern

This Council is committed to ensuring that all of us have a safe, reliable, and confidential way of reporting any suspicious activity. We want Members and each and every member of staff to know how they can raise concerns.

We all have a responsibility to help detect, prevent and report instances of bribery. If you have a concern regarding a suspected instance of bribery or corruption, please speak up – your information and assistance will help. The sooner you act, the sooner it can be resolved.

Preferably the disclosure will be made and resolved internally (e.g. to your Section Manager/Assistant Director/Director). Secondly, where internal disclosure proves inappropriate, concerns can be raised with the External Auditor or relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations.

Concerns can be reported anonymously. In the event that an incident of bribery is reported, we will act as soon as possible to evaluate the situation. We have a clearly defined Anti Fraud Strategy which sets out procedures for investigating fraud, misconduct and non-compliance issues and these will be followed in any investigation of this kind.

Members and staff who refuse to accept a bribe, or those who raise concerns can understandably be worried about the repercussions. The Council aims to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

The Council is committed to ensuring nobody suffers detrimental treatment through refusing to take part in bribery, or because of reporting a concern in good faith.

Section Seven

Anti-Money Laundering Policy

Introduction

Although local authorities are not directly covered by the requirements of the Money Laundering Regulations 2007, guidance from CIPFA indicates that they should comply with the underlying spirit of the legislation and regulations.

Epping Forest District Council is committed to the highest possible standards of conduct and has, therefore, put in place appropriate and proportionate anti-money laundering safeguards and reporting arrangements.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all employees and contractors, whether permanent or temporary, and Members of the Council.

Its aim is to enable employees and Members to respond to a concern they have in the course of their dealings for the Council. Individuals who have a concern relating to a matter outside work should contact the Police.

Definition of Money Laundering

The most common motive for crime is financial gain or to obtain valuable property. Whenever criminals do anything with that financial gain or criminal property, they 'launder' it. Money laundering offences are serious; they carry sentences of up to 14 years imprisonment, but criminals and their associates still commit them every day.

Money laundering is the process by which criminals try to hide the origin of the proceeds of their crimes, making it look as if those proceeds were acquired legitimately. In doing so, criminal property obtained unlawfully is turned into property or money that can be accessed via legitimate methods without arousing suspicion. In other words, 'laundering' is the process of turning 'dirty' money into 'clean' money.

Money laundering has three distinct phases. They are:

- Placement; the movement of criminally-obtained money into the wider economy;
- Layering; undertaking transactions (perhaps bogus) to conceal the origin of the money; and
- Integration; making it look as if money has come from a legitimate source.

Two distinct offences affect employee's contractors and Members of the Council

- Failure to disclose one of the offences listed above, where there are reasonable grounds for knowledge or suspicion.
- Tipping off a person(s) who is or is suspected of being involved in money laundering in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of or prejudice an investigation.

Although the term 'money laundering' is generally used to describe the activities of organised crime, for most people it will involve a suspicion that someone they know, or know of, is benefiting financially from dishonest activities.

Successful money laundering means criminals can enjoy the fruits of their criminality and fund further criminal activity. Stopping money laundering disrupts organised crime by removing the life-blood of the 'business' and prevents low level criminals from moving up into major level crime.

Requirements of the Money Laundering Legislation

The main requirements of the legislation are:

- To appoint a money laundering reporting officer.
- Maintain client identification procedures known as know your customer (KYC) and know your business (KYB).
- Implement a procedure to enable the reporting of suspicions of money laundering.
- Maintain record keeping procedures.

The Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO)

The Council must appoint an MLRO to act as the focal point within the organisation for money laundering matters. The MLRO is responsible for:

- receiving disclosures from other staff; and
- deciding whether disclosures should be passed on to NCA.

The MLRO must keep copies of all disclosures received by them, notes of action taken and copies of all correspondence with NCA and other agencies.

Identifying and disclosing suspicious transactions

Epping Forest District Council will consider the threats to Council being used by money launderers and put systems in place to guard against them. Policies and procedures should be laid out clearly so that all relevant staff understand and have access to them.

The officer nominated to receive disclosures about money laundering activity within the Council is the Director of Resources, Bob Palmer. He can be contacted as follows:

Bob Palmer - Director of Resources
Civic Offices
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ

Telephone: 01992 564279.
Email: bpalmer@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

In the absence of the MLRO, the Council's Accredited Financial Investigator is authorised to deputise for him and can be contacted via The Corporate Fraud Team, telephone number 01992 564763 or by email at investigations@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

All suspicions should be reported directly to the MLRO or his deputy using the relevant documentation.

Client Identification Procedures

Although not a legal requirement, the Council has developed formal client identification procedures which must be followed when Council land or property is being sold. These procedures require individuals and if appropriate, companies to provide proof of identity and current address (KYC).

All verification documents are capable of being forged and can be bought over the internet. For this reason, industry guidance usually recommends face-to-face meetings with new clients. Excuses for non-attendance and excuses for missing documents should be explored and treated with some scepticism.

If satisfactory evidence is not obtained at the outset of a matter, then the transaction must not be progressed and a disclosure report must be submitted to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer.

All personal data must be collected, kept or destroyed in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Reporting Procedure for Suspicions of Money Laundering

Where you know or suspect that money laundering activity is taking/has taken place, or become concerned that your involvement in a matter may amount to a prohibited act under the Act, you must disclose this as soon as practicable to the MLRO. The disclosure should be within "hours" of the information coming to your attention, not weeks or months later.

Your disclosure should be made to the MLRO using the disclosure report; the report must include as much detail as possible including

- Full details of the people involved
- Full details of the nature of their/your involvement.
- The types of money laundering activity involved
- The dates of such activities
- Whether the transactions have happened, are ongoing or are imminent;
- Where they took place;
- How they were undertaken;
- The (likely) amount of money/assets involved;
- Why, exactly, you are suspicious.

Along with any other available information to enable the MLRO to make a sound judgment as to whether there are reasonable grounds for knowledge or suspicion of money laundering and to enable him to prepare his report to the National Crime Agency (NCA), where appropriate. You should also enclose copies of any relevant supporting documentation.

Once you have reported the matter to the MLRO you must follow any directions he may give you. You must NOT make any further enquiries into the matter yourself: any necessary investigation will be undertaken by the NCA. Simply report your suspicions to the MLRO who will refer the matter on to the NCA if appropriate. All members of staff will be required to co-operate with the MLRO and the authorities during any subsequent money laundering investigation.

Similarly, at no time and under no circumstances should you voice any suspicions to the person(s) whom you suspect of money laundering, even if the NCA has given consent to a particular transaction proceeding, without the specific consent of the MLRO; otherwise you may commit a criminal offence of "tipping off".

Do not, therefore, make any reference on a client file to a report having been made to the MLRO – should the client exercise their right to see the file, then such a note will obviously tip them off to the report having been made and may render you liable to prosecution. The MLRO will keep the appropriate records in a confidential manner.

Consideration of the disclosure by the Money Laundering Reporting Officer

Upon receipt of a disclosure report, the MLRO must note the date of receipt on his section of the report and acknowledge receipt of it. He should also advise you of the timescale within which he expects to respond to you.

The MLRO will consider the report and any other available internal information he thinks relevant e.g.:

- reviewing other transaction patterns and volumes;
- the length of any business relationship involved;
- the number of any one-off transactions and linked one-off transactions;
- any identification evidence held;

And undertake such other reasonable inquiries he thinks appropriate in order to ensure that all available information is taken into account in deciding whether a report to the NCA is required (such enquiries being made in such a way as to avoid any appearance of tipping off those involved). The MLRO may also need to discuss the report with you.

Once the MLRO has evaluated the disclosure report and any other relevant information, he must make a timely determination as to whether:

- there is actual or suspected money laundering taking place; or
- there are reasonable grounds to know or suspect that is the case; and
- whether he needs to seek consent from the NCA for a particular transaction to proceed.

Where the MLRO does so conclude, then he must disclose the matter as soon as practicable to the NCA on their standard report form and in the prescribed manner, unless he has a reasonable excuse for non-disclosure to the NCA (for example, if you are a lawyer and you wish to claim legal professional privilege for not disclosing the information).

Where the MLRO suspects money laundering but has a reasonable excuse for non-disclosure, then he must note the report accordingly; he can then immediately give his consent for any ongoing or imminent transactions to proceed.

In cases where legal professional privilege may apply, the MLRO must liaise with the Council's Financial Investigator to decide whether there is a reasonable excuse for not reporting the matter to the NCA.

All disclosure reports referred to the MLRO and reports made by him to the NCA must be retained by the MLRO in a confidential file kept for that purpose, for a minimum of five years.

The MLRO commits a criminal offence if he knows or suspects, or has reasonable grounds to do so, through a disclosure being made to him, that another person is engaged in money laundering and he does not disclose this as soon as practicable to the NCA.

Training

Officers considered likely to be exposed to suspicious situations, will be made aware of these by their senior officer and provided with appropriate training.

Additionally, all employees and Members will be familiarised with the legal and regulatory requirements relating to money laundering and how they affect both the Council and themselves.

Notwithstanding the paragraphs above, it is the duty of officers and Members to report all suspicious transactions whether they have received their training or not.

Section 8

Epping Forest District Council Fraud Response Plan

Introduction

The Fraud Response Plan defines the way in which the Council applies its various policies and procedures to suspected instances of theft, fraud corruption and bribery both staff and non-staff related. It fits in with, and is designed to be read in conjunction with the Council's Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy, Bribery Policy, Anti Money Laundering Policy and the Whistleblowing / Confidential Reporting Policy. The aim of this plan is to provide clear guidance for dealing with these issues, access to rapid relevant advice and a guide for managers on how to react and deal with suspicions of fraud, theft, corruption and bribery.

Additionally, it seeks to give a brief outline on how investigations will be progressed (although no detail will be given regarding investigation techniques etc.).

The Fraud Response Plan is designed to ensure timely and effective action in the event of suspected fraud by:

- Seeking to minimise the extent of the fraud by taking prompt action
- Preventing further losses where fraud had occurred.
- Maximising the recovery (or the chances of recovering) any financial losses
- Ensuring the accuracy and integrity of evidence for successful criminal prosecution and / or disciplinary action
- The early identification of any system weaknesses and the lessons to be learnt for preventing them in the future
- Maximising positive publicity where frauds are discovered and dealt with.
- Deterring others from any illegal / inappropriate conduct they may be committing or contemplating.

The Manager's Role in dealing with suspected fraud

First Response

Where managers suspect a staff member of fraud or their involvement in a fraud is taking place, the first course of action **must** be to contact the Director of Governance, Chief Internal Auditor or the Corporate Fraud Manager who will ensure that the Section 151 Officer and the Chief Executive are informed.

Although, the Council no longer investigates Housing Benefit fraud, where a suspicion occurs of a staff member's involvement in a Housing Benefit (including Local Council Tax Support) fraud, the above steps should still be followed.

All other suspicions of benefit fraud (including Local Council Tax Support) must be reported to the Compliance Manager within the Benefits Division. Suspicions can also be reported directly to The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) via their website (www.gov.uk/report-benefit-fraud) or by calling the National Benefit Fraud Hotline on 0800 854440 or by textphone on 0800 328 0512. It may be prudent to seek the advice of either The Corporate Fraud Manager or The Compliance Manager before contacting the DWP however, as Local Council Tax Support cannot be investigated by the DWP.

In usual circumstances, the suspicion will be passed to the Corporate Fraud Team to assess and undertake an investigation if appropriate. All Suspicions of any type of fraud (including those that do not involve staff members) can be forwarded to the Corporate Fraud Team by way of a specially designed fraud referral form, blank copies of which can be found on the corporate intranet. These can be emailed to the Corporate Fraud Team (investigations@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) or handed to any member of the team. Alternatively, a member of the Corporate Fraud Team can be made available to discuss the matter in private if required. Telephone referrals can also be made using the dedicated fraud hotline (01992 564444). The Corporate Fraud Manager / Chief Internal Auditor will retain overall responsibility for the conduct of the investigation, however it is probable that the matter will be allocated to a Corporate Fraud Investigator to undertake any investigation. As part of the Internal Audit service, the Corporate Fraud Team will be independent of any service area under investigation and all of the officers comprising the Corporate Fraud Team currently are fully trained and accredited investigators each holding the qualification of Accredited Counter Fraud Officer / Specialist whilst the Corporate Fraud Manager also holds the qualification of Accredited Counter Fraud Manager.

There may be circumstances where it is appropriate for managers to undertake some preliminary enquiries to ascertain the validity of an allegation or irregularity (for example, to establish whether on the face of it, there is a case to be investigated), however before embarking on such action, advice should always be sought from a member of the Corporate Fraud Team as such action may alert the fraudster and could result in the concealing or destroying of vital evidence or compromise the investigation and the collection of further evidence.

In cases of suspected fraud involving a staff member, the investigating officer will liaise and work with Human Resources at the earliest available opportunity on disciplinary matters such as suspending the staff member to enable further investigation and protect vital evidence.

Initial Enquiries

As stated above, the manager may make discreet initial enquiries in order to:

- Determine any facts that gave rise to the suspicion
- Examine any factors to determine whether there has been a genuine mistake made or whether an irregularity has occurred

Any actions and findings should be clearly recorded and documented ensuring that access is restricted (for example, not held on an “open” area of the computer network or in the case of paper notes, making sure they are securely locked away).

It is important that the suspected perpetrator is not interviewed at this stage nor any allegations / suspicions put to them. If in doubt at any point, the manager must seek the guidance of the Corporate Fraud Team or the Chief Internal Auditor.

Formal Investigation

If a formal investigation is required, it will be conducted by a qualified Corporate Fraud Investigator. The nature of the investigation, lines of enquiry followed and evidence obtained will vary depending on the irregularity being investigated and will, for the most part be fluid and reactive. Generally, however, the investigating officer will be seeking to gather evidence by way of interviews, the taking of written witness statements and the obtaining of evidence be it physical, documentary etc.

In cases of suspected staff fraud, the investigating officer will consult and take advice from Human Resources particularly on matters regarding employment law, policies and procedural matters. It is imperative however, that a clear distinction must be made in these circumstances between those advising the investigating officer and those advising the staff member.

Legal Services will be consulted as appropriate to advise or seek external advice in order to support any investigation.

Any investigation will be conducted with full compliance with The Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996 which governs the conduct of a criminal investigation (such as obtaining and recording evidence etc.) as well as any other legislation that may apply such as The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), The Human Rights Act 1998 and Data Protection Act etc. (this list is meant as an example and is not exhaustive).

In general terms however, the following principles will apply to the investigation:

- Any investigation will be conducted promptly (subject to evidence gathering activities) with periodic updates given as appropriate to the Chief Internal Auditor and / or the Director of the relevant service.
- All actions and evidence will be recorded either by written or electronic means and stored securely with access given purely on a “need to know” basis.

- Enquiries and evidence gathering activities will be undertaken as discreetly as possible with sensitivities observed where appropriate.
- Confidentiality will be maintained throughout with information only shared where circumstances and the law allows.

Where it is considered appropriate, the investigation may involve the input of other agencies such as local authorities as well as other law enforcement agencies such as the Police and HM Revenue & Customs. Liaison and / or joint working will be conducted in accordance with established guidelines and protocols.

The investigating officer must not and will not accept any offer of repayment of monies or resignation at any stage during the investigation, however any such offers will be noted and recorded on the investigation file and reported to the Chief Internal Auditor/responsible Director.

The Council has a right to suspend any employee involved pending the outcome of an investigation. Any such suspension, is, in the opinion of the Council, a neutral act and does not imply any guilt on behalf of the suspended employee. The suspension of an employee can, in some circumstances aid the speed in which an investigation can be conducted and serve to preserve vital evidence.

When suspects are not suspended, supervision of the employee will usually need to be increased and any manager should seek the advice of Human Resources and ICT on how this can best be accomplished.

Actions following the completion of an investigation

Upon the completion of an investigation, the investigating officer will report their findings in the first instance to the Corporate Fraud Manager and Chief Internal Auditor, who will (in staff related cases) in turn, make the findings known to Human Resources, relevant Director or the Chief Executive

In the case of any monetary losses, a report will be given to the Council's insurance officer.

Should any control weaknesses be identified, the Director and relevant manager will be informed and remedies are actioned immediately. The Chief Internal Auditor / Internal Audit Unit will be able to provide advice and support regarding effective control mechanisms.

Should there be disciplinary issues identified as part of the investigation, a full report will be made to Human Resources who will work with the relevant Director and manager to decide what happens next. Should any course of action result in a disciplinary hearing, the investigating officer will (if required) make themselves available to give evidence at the hearing.

Although some organisations delay the bringing of any disciplinary action pending the outcome of any criminal prosecution, the Council will seek to deal with any disciplinary matters using the appropriate processes.

Should it be the case that criminal action presents itself as an option, this decision will be fully explored and subject to the Council's Fraud Prosecution Policy. Should fraud be proven, the Council will make every effort to recover any monetary losses. The method of doing so may vary depending on the type of loss and relevant

legislation, however all options will be explored including civil court proceedings and in the case of criminal prosecution, proceedings brought under The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

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Report to the Council

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Appointment of Members to External Organisations

1. EPPING FOREST LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL

Recommending:

That the Council appoint four member representatives to the Epping Forest Local Highways Panel for 2017/18, in accordance with the revised terms of reference agreed by Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways.

- 1.1 At its annual meeting on 25 May 2017, the Council appointed the following member representatives to the Epping Forest Local Highways Panel for 2017/18:

Councillor N. Avey
Councillor R. Bassett
Councillor G. Chambers
Councillor J. Knapman
Councillor P. Keska
Councillor C. Roberts
Councillor E. Webster

- 1.2 The Director of Governance has subsequently been advised that the terms of reference of the Local Highways Panel were revised by Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways in November 2016 and now provide for only four member representatives be appointed to the Panel by this Council, alongside four members of the County Council. It does not appear that the Council had been formally advised of the revised terms of reference and membership requirements for the Panel, at the time of the recent annual meeting and this has only come to light on the communication to the County Council of the details of the seven member representatives appointed on 25 May 2017.

- 1.3 The revised terms of reference of the Panel require that overall membership must be representative of the political composition of Essex County Council, who have advised that membership should therefore comprise six members of the Conservative Group and two from the other political groups and independent members. The four Essex County Council representatives appointed to the Panel by the Chairman (Councillor V. Metcalfe) for 2017/18 are:

Councillor V. Metcalfe (Conservative Group)
Councillor C. Whitbread (Conservative Group)
Councillor A. Jackson (Conservative Group)
Councillor C. C. Pond (Independent)

- 1.4 The Council is therefore requested to appoint four member representatives (three members of the Conservative Group and one from the other political groups and independent members) to the Epping Forest Local Highways Panel, in accordance with its revised terms of reference. The appointment of members to external organisations is a matter reserved to the Council.

2. CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND

Recommending:

That the Council appoint a deputy member representative to the Campaign to Protect Rural England for 2017/18.

- 2.1 At its annual meeting on 25 May 2017, the Council appointed Councillor Y. Knight as its representative on the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). The Council did not appoint a deputy representative to CPRE at the annual meeting.
- 2.2 The Council is therefore now requested to appoint a deputy member representative to the CPRE for 2017/18. The appointment of members to external organisations is a matter reserved to the Council.

3. CO-OPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Recommending:

That the Council note the appointment of Councillor N. Bedford (Deputy) and Councillor C. Whitbread as additional member representatives to the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board for 2017/18.

- 3.1 At its annual meeting on 25 May 2017, the Council noted the appointment by the Leader, of Councillor J. Philip as one of its representatives on the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board for 2017/18.
- 3.2 Since the annual meeting, the Leader has also appointed Councillor N. Bedford (Deputy) and himself as additional member representatives to the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board.
- 3.3 The Council is requested to note these additional appointments for 2017/18.

Report to the Council

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Chairmanship & Vice-Chairmanship of Committees, Sub-Committees & Panels 2017/18

1. STAFF APPEALS PANEL - APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN

Recommending:

That the Council make appointment to the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Staff Appeals Panel for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year.

- 1.1 At its annual meeting on 25 May 2017, the Council appointed the following members to membership of the Staff Appeals Panel for 2017/18:

Councillor G. Chambers
Councillor L. Mead
Councillor S. Neville
Councillor B. Rolfe
Councillor B. Sandler

- 1.2 The Staff Appeals Panel has not been required to convene for a number of years and the Council hasn't formally appointed a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel during this period. However, the Constitution (Article 8) requires that a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel should be appointed at the annual Council meeting each year.
- 1.3 A meeting of the Staff Appeals Panel will be held during August 2017. The Council is therefore requested to make appointment to the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year, from amongst those members previously appointed to membership for the year.

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REPORT ON WALTHAM ABBEY ROYAL GUNPOWDER MILLS COMPANY MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES

Meeting of the trustees in the Walton House meeting room on the 17th of June 2017.

In my last report, I gave the members the latest information regarding the PGL/Foundation appeal. The appeal has been withdrawn and the Operating Company has put different Plans for the future of the WARGM.

There has also been a common understanding for the formation of a working group with members from both the Foundation and the Operating Companies in order to discuss and agree proposals for long and short-term business plans.

The site -wide plan will be compliant with the Local (EFDC) plan, National Planning Policy Framework, Green belt and Landscape regulations, Listed Building, SSSI and Conservation Area policies, as well as regional strategies for tourism, enterprise, training and education. In this way investment and strategic partnerships, grant-givers and wider stakeholders can be identified, thus ensuring long-term support and sustainability.

A variety of new uses might be accommodated in areas of the site. Future plans could include a small-scale holiday camp, rental of several buildings; examples might include scientific uses such as research, training for heritage and conservation, educational/museum/leisure accommodation etc.

The WARGM site has proven significant value already as a film and photoshoot location, so it is important that this continues. It is with great pleasure that my report reflects the positive activity and thoughts discussed in the recent meeting.

I have passed my warmest wishes and the members' wishes as the WARGM and the Foundation are looking forward to the future in such a positive way.

I will keep reporting to the members of any progress of any future plans.

Cllr Helen Kane

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