

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES

Committee: Council **Date:** 26 July 2016

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, W Breare-Hall, R Brookes, R Butler, G Chambers, K Chana, L Girling, A Grigg, S Heap, L Hughes, R Jennings, J Jennings, H Kane, S Kane, H Kauffman, P Keska, A Lion, G Mohindra, R Morgan, S Murray, S Neville, A Patel, J Philip, C P Pond, C C Pond, C Roberts, D Roberts, B Rolfe, M Sartin, G Shiell, S Stavrou, B Surtees, G Waller, E Webster, C Whitbread, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley

Apologies: Councillors N Bedford, A Boyce, H Brady, D Dorrell, R Gadsby, J Knapman, Y Knight, L Mead, A Mitchell, B Sandler, L Wagland and S Watson

Officers Present: G Chipp (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), C O'Boyle (Director of Governance), A Hall (Director of Communities), P Maddock (Assistant Director (Accountancy)), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager), D Bailey (Head of Transformation), R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer), S Kits (Social Media and Customer Services Officer) and A Rose (Marketing & Digital Content Officer)

18. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Services Manager 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.

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meetings held on 26 May 2016 and 6 June 2016 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a non pecuniary interest in item 11, Capital Supplementary Estimate – Development of St John's Road, Epping by virtue of being the Essex County Councillor for Epping and Theydon Bois, an Epping Town Councillor and a resident of St John's Road. Councillor J M Whitehouse indicated that he would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the application and voting.

21. FORMER DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ANDREW O'BRIEN

It was with much sadness that the Chairman informed the Council of the death of former Councillor Andrew O'Brien.

Andrew O'Brien had served as a Conservative District Councillor representing the Epping (Epping Lindsey) Ward from 1976 to 1991 and as Leader of the Epping and Area Residents' Association Group from 1991 until 1999. He had served on various Committees including, Environmental Health & Control Committee, Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee, Recreation and Amenities Committee, Libraries and Museums Sub-Committee, Leisure Services Committee, Plans Sub-Committee B, Public Health, North Weald Airfield Sub-Committee, Public Health Committee and the Joint Staff Committee.

Members paid tribute to the memory of former District Councillor Andrew O'Brien and stood for a minute's silence in his memory.

22. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Announcements by the Chairman of Council

(i) Chairman's Events

The Chairman advised that she had attended many events around the District and had received an embroidered cushion for the Battle of the Somme Commemoration, which she intended to raffle for her charity.

(ii) Floral Display

The Chairman announced that she proposed to send the flowers from the meeting to the residents of Cunningham House, North Weald.

23. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Council noted that there were no public questions under notice for the meeting.

24. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

The Council noted that there were no questions under notice for the meeting.

25. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(a) Leader of the Council

The Leader advised that he had made a number of changes to the Cabinet and thanked previous Members for their contributions, as well as to the new Portfolio Holders for continuing the ongoing programme of work.

The Local Plan remained the Council's priority and consultation on the draft Local Plan was due to begin on 31 October 2016. The Leader thanked Members for attending the local workshops and the positive contributions made, which would help shape the Local Plan and the District's future.

Furthermore, the Leader advised that he had attended a number of meetings representing the interests of the authority across Essex. The Devolution deal had been delayed, due to the majority of Essex Leaders voting against a Mayor based system. This had resulted in consultation being required with the Secretary of State to see whether an alternative system could be considered. The Leader also advised that partnership working with neighbouring authorities had produced a much better understanding between Uttlesford, Harlow and hopefully Brentwood, and there

looked to be a community of interest and other possible working partnerships. The Council had also recently hosted a meeting of the Epping Forest Locality Board, which brought together Essex County Councillors, Epping Forest District Council Cabinet Members and Local Members of Parliament.

Finally the Leader and Councillor M Sartin had met with Public Health England, to establish what opportunities were available to the District arising from the relocation to Harlow.

(b) Finance Portfolio Holder

Councillor G Mohindra advised that he had attended a Local Government Association briefing for Business rates, where local councils were set to retain 100% of Business Rates, although that would entail them gaining additional responsibilities. Furthermore there were still outstanding business rate appeals and the Council had set aside a provision of £4 million.

The consultation on Business Rates would end on 26 September 2016 and officers were working on the Council's response.

(c) Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder

Councillor R Bassett updated the Council on the prosecution of an illegal eviction. The defendant had appealed her sentence and had sought a conditional discharge. The case had been listed at Chelmsford Court for the 9 September 2016.

(d) Housing Portfolio Holder

Councillor S Stavrou informed Members that she had arranged for a summary of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to be published in the next edition of the Council Bulletin.

26. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

(a) Impact of rents for social housing on local authorities house building programmes

Councillor S Murray asked the newly appointed Housing Portfolio Holder, whether she had been aware of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Chartered Institute of Housing, publishing a joint report early in July 2016. It assessed that the current impact of the Government's policy on rents for social housing would cut the ability of local authorities to build houses by 92%, a drop from half a million to 45,000 new homes and what possible effect this would have on the Councils ability to sustain the Council house building programme.

Councillor S Stavrou advised that she had not read that particular report and since being appointed, she had met with many Officers and covered a vast array of information but would be establishing a more in-depth analysis of the Portfolio shortly. She would supply a detailed written answer to Councillor S Murray regarding his question.

(b) Business Rate Relief for the Food Bank

Councillor B Surtees asked the Finance Portfolio Holder whether the Food Bank newly located in the District, could benefit from some sort of business rates relief as a charitable status.

Councillor G Mohindra advised that he would investigate this matter.

(c) The Effects of the Section 278 Works around Langston Road, Debden

Councillor C C Pond asked the Asset and Economic Development Portfolio Holder whether she would consider rent abatements for the Council's commercial units in the Broadway, following concerns from traders and the notification of Section 278 Works for the Langston Road development, if a decline in trading was proved and justified.

Councillor A Grigg advised that in relation to the Section 278 Works in that area, as much as possible was being completed throughout the evenings until 5.30 a.m., although it could take longer than originally thought. She understood the views of the traders and would certainly look into it, although could not guarantee anything and asked the traders to put together their case.

(d) Fly Tipping on Housing Land

Councillor D Wixley asked the Environment Portfolio Holder whether the Councils approach to flying tipping on Council owned land could be treated through one system, after a request to the Neighbourhoods Team to removed fly tipping from the garage site 109-127 Pyrles Lane, Loughton, resulted in the request being referred to the Housing Management team to authorise and it was still there.

Councillor W Breare-Hall advised that he would look into the flying tipping at the garage site immediately. Although with regards to the broader issue of fly tipping, he advised that the responsibilities to clear the fly tipping and the cost involved with it had to be attributed to the relevant service area.

(e) Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Scheme Reductions

Councillor J M Whitehouse asked the Safer, Cleaner & Transport Portfolio Holder whether the reduced list of TRO schemes in the District had incorporated all representation made by Ward Members and if not, would he make sure that the list was circulated before the next submission to the North Essex Parking Partnership meeting in October 2016.

Councillor G Waller advised that reduction had been made to make the number of schemes more manageable. He assured that where there was support from Members, the scheme would be kept on the list and he aimed to give as much priority as possible to those schemes.

(f) Starting Blocks at Loughton Swimming Pool

Councillor R Brookes asked the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder whether the starting blocks at the Loughton swimming pool could be replaced due to them being broken and not fit for purpose.

Councillor H Kane advised that she would investigate this issue and would discuss the problem after the meeting for further details.

(g) Off Road Motor Cyclists

Councillor L Girling asked the Environment Portfolio Holder whether he would consider approaching the police to establish more hotspot reference points for

reporting off road motorcyclists causing nuisance and whether there was anything further the Council could do to fine the offenders.

Councillor W Breare-Hall advised that this problem were of great concern and he would be more than happy to take the suggestions further and advise Councillor L Girling of the outcome.

27. MOTIONS

(a) The Condemning Of Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes

Moved by Councillor S Neville and seconded by Councillor S Heap

“As a Council we are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our country. Our council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate against others to become acceptable.

We will continue to work to ensure that local bodies and programmes have the support and resources they need to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia.

We reassure all people living in this area that they are valued members of our community.”

Amendment moved by Councillor G Waller and seconded by Councillor C Whitbread

At end, add the following words:

“Council notes that the number of hate crime reports in the Epping Forest District rose during the week following the referendum on 23 June 2016 (though such incidents are rare compared with some Essex local authority areas);

It is noted, furthermore, that the figure has subsequently fallen back, although any occurrence is unacceptable. Council welcomes the fact that all reports of hate crime are properly followed up, and that Essex Police are working closely with the Council’s Community Safety team to provide a proper response to all such reports in order to deter further incidents.”

Carried

Motion as amended ADOPTED

RESOLVED:

That as a Council;

- (1) We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our country;
- (2) We condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate against others to become acceptable;
- (3) We will continue to work to ensure that local bodies and programmes have the support and resources they need to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia;

(4) We reassure all people living in this area that they are valued members of our community;

(5) We note that the number of hate crime reports in the Epping Forest District rose during the week following the referendum on 23 June 2016 (though such incidents are rare compared with some Essex local authority areas); and

(6) We note that the figure had subsequently fallen back, although any occurrence was unacceptable and welcomed the fact that all reports of hate crime were properly followed up, and that Essex Police were working closely with the Council's Community Safety team to provide a proper response to all such reports in order to deter further incidents.

28. REPORTS OF CABINET

(a) Capital Supplementary Estimate – Development of St John's Road, Epping

Mover: Councillor A Grigg, Portfolio Holder for Assets and Economic Development

Councillor A Grigg submitted a report requesting a Capital supplementary estimate for the development of the St John's Road, Epping site to fund the alternative cash contribution for Lindsay House to Essex County Council

Report as first Moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That a Capital supplementary of £750,000 for the alternative cash contribution for Lindsay House to Essex County Council be approved.

29. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor C Whitbread reported on the Leader appointment which he made to the Essex Flood Partnership which carried out Executive Functions.

The Democratic Services Manager reported on a request from the City of London Corporation to appoint member representatives to the Epping Forest Local Liaison Group.

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

RESOLVED:

(1) That Councillor W. Breare-Hall (Environment Portfolio Holder) be appointed as the Council's representative on the Essex Partnership for Flood Management;

(2) That Councillor G. Waller (Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder) be appointed as deputy for Councillor W. Breare-Hall as the Council's representative on the partnership;

(3) That the following Members be appointed as the Councils representatives on the Epping Forest Local Liaison Group for the remainder of the municipal year in accordance with the specified membership requirements of the Corporation of London;

Councillor L Hughes - Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing;
Councillor G Chambers - Buckhurst Hill West;
Councillor W Breare-Hall - Epping Lindsay and Thornwood Common;
Councillor N Avey - Epping Hemnall;
Councillor C P Pond - Loughton St. John's;
Councillor J Jennings - Loughton St. Mary's;
Councillor R Baldwin - Loughton Forest;
Councillor J Philips - Theydon Bois; and
Councillor S Stavrou - Waltham Abbey High Beach.

30. AUDIT & GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Director of Governance reported on the Audit & Governance Annual Report for 2015/16. The Finance of Portfolio Holder, Councillor G Mohindra thanked the members of the Audit and Governance Committee for their work throughout the year.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the Audit & Governance Annual Report for 2015/16 be noted.

31. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

The Council received the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and its Select Committees and Task and Finish Panels for 2015/16 from the Chairman of the Committee Councillor M Sartin.

(b) Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Council received a written report from Councillor M Sartin, the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

32. CALL-IN AND URGENCY - PURCHASE OF STREET PROPERTIES

The Council noted that the Chairman of the Council had agreed that the following decisions be treated as a matter of urgency and not subject to call in;

(a) Purchase of Street Properties - 12 Caldbeck, Waltham Abbey & 15 Willow Path, Waltham Abbey

That the Council purchase the street properties at 12 Caldbeck, Waltham Abbey and 15 Willow Path, Waltham Abbey for the sum of £335,000 and £279,950 respectively, subject to a satisfactory property searches, surveys, valuations and contracts.

(b) Purchase of Street Properties – 11 Caneland Court, Waltham Abbey & 7 Milhoo Court, Waltham Abbey

That the Council purchase the street properties at 11 Caneland Court, Waltham Abbey and 7 Milhoo Court, Waltham Abbey in the sums of £310,000 and £290,000 respectively, subject to the completion of satisfactory property searches, surveys, valuations and contracts.

33. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The Council received a written report regarding the Royal Gunpowder Mills from Councillor H Kane, the Council's representative. There were no further updates from Council representatives on any other business of joint arrangements and external organisations and no requests were made for written reports at the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN