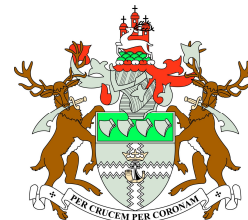


Supplementary Council Agenda



Epping Forest District Council

Council Tuesday, 6th November, 2012

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Room: Council Chamber

Time: 7.30 pm

Committee Secretary: Council Secretary: Ian Willett
Tel: 01992 564243 Email:
democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY) (Pages 101 - 102)

To the attached answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 11.3 of the Council Procedure 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 the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; or
- (c) to any Portfolio Holder.

6. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 103 - 110)

To receive the attached reports from the Finance and Technology Portfolio Holder and the Planning Portfolio Holder on matters falling within their area of responsibility.

8. MOTIONS (Pages 111 - 112)

To consider any motions, notice of which has been given under Council Procedure Rule 13.

9. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE (Pages 113 - 114)

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in

paragraph 12.3 of the Council Procedure 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 Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;
- (c) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or
- (d) to any Member of the Cabinet;.

Council Procedure rule 12.4 provides 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.

Council Meeting 6 November 2012 – Public Questions

Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

(a) Questions from Mr G Osen, Chigwell Residents Association

- “1. Does the Council generally consider and/or implement the views of the Local Plan inspector?”
2. The Local Plan inspector has previously stated that Chigwell Brook Valley is strategically important (i.e. 'the potential loss of this area of Green Belt for residential development would have a significant impact on the setting of the Chigwell Brook Valley'). Therefore as development on CHG-D would destroy this area of Green Belt will this result in it being removed from the draft Plan”?

(b) Questions from Mr E Bow, Chairman of Chigwell Residents Association

- “1. Is it appropriate to include Green Belt sites not put forward by owners in the Local Plan when brown field sites owned by Council have not been included? Why?”
- 2 Does the Council consider that sites under multiple ownership and not listed in the call for sites by owners are deliverable under the Local Plan”?

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 6 November 2012

Subject: Finance and Technology

Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Stavrou

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance & Technology Portfolio Holder be noted

Accountancy

At our last meeting on 27 September I provided an oral update on the decision of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee to recommend a further year of freezing the Council Tax. The Government subsequently announced a grant equivalent to a 1% increase in Council Tax for authorities freezing their charge. No allowance had been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for this and so it is a bonus for us. I am pleased to confirm that Cabinet agreed with the recommendations of the Cabinet Committee and so parameters have been set for the 2013/14 budget that include no increase in the Council Tax.

Work on the budget for next year is continuing and it is hoped that the grant figures will be available shortly after the Autumn Statement on 5 December.

Benefits

The results of the consultation on the Council's scheme for Local Council Tax Support were reported to Cabinet on 22 October. The number of responses was disappointing but was consistent with other authorities both in Essex and more widely across the country. Cabinet decided that the draft scheme as presented should go forward to Full Council, although it is not at this meeting as the legislation is still to receive Royal Assent.

The Government released details of a scheme on 19 October that may assist authorities who are able to introduce local schemes with relatively low charges and no changes in banding or capital limits. In order for our scheme to be self-financing, which is the agreed principle that all Essex authorities have been working on with the County Council, we are planning on a charge of 20%, capping the calculation at band D level and reducing the level of savings that people can hold before being charged from £16,000 to £6,000. Thus in order to meet the grant requirements we would have to pursue a fundamentally different scheme which would have necessitated either another consultation or taking on the risk of challenge for a lack of consultation on the implemented scheme. In any event, the money on offer was substantially less than that required to break even and a deficit approaching £600,000 would have had to be financed. I understand work with the other Essex districts indicates that the additional costs for districts in complying with the grant requirements would be £8.2 million and the additional grant would only be £2.5 million.

Our Benefits and Housing officers will continue to work closely together and with organisations like the Citizen's Advice Bureau to provide information and advice as it becomes available. Further announcements on the role of District Councils in Universal Credit and the transfer of existing Housing Benefit claims to Universal Credit are eagerly awaited.

Revenues

In my previous report I mentioned the possible effect of the proposed financial reforms on the Council Tax bases for town and parish councils. The Government consultation on the alternative proposals to address these concerns closed on 9 October but no results have been published. If any additional information becomes available I will provide an oral update.

Performance Management

(a) Key Performance Indicators 2012/13

A range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for 2012/13 was adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2012, and a target was set for at least 70% of the indicators to achieve target performance by the end of the year. The first quarter position with regard to the achievement of target performance for the quarterly monitored KPIs was as follows:

- 21 (77.78%) indicators achieved the performance target; and
- 6 (22.22%) indicators did not achieve the performance target.

The overall number of indicators achieving target for the first quarter of the year was above 70%, and the consistency and direction of performance is felt to be encouraging. Detailed performance reports for each KPI were considered by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel at its meeting in September 2012, and cumulative KPI performance reports for the second quarter of the year will be considered by the Scrutiny Panel later this month.

(b) Value for Money

The Council is committed to delivering excellent services that meet the needs of its residents and customers, and has a corporate responsibility to achieve value for money in its operations and be able to show that its costs compare well with others, reflect priorities and policy decisions, and are commensurate with service delivery, performance and outcomes. A recent report of the Audit Commission ('Tough Times'), recommended that local authorities use the Commission's 'Value for Money Profile' to see how they compared to the national picture, to identify councils facing similar challenges, and to learn from the approach of other authority's.

The Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and Scrutiny Panel have considered an analysis of the Value for Money Profile as a point of reference for a range of comparative value for money data, and to allow the identification of value for money indicators or issues that should be subject to further in-depth review. Members have been requested to suggest proposals for further action, analysis, investigation or report in respect of particular areas of concern in relation to the value for money data presented in the analysis.

The action plan for the Council's current Value for Money Strategy is being reviewed, and will be considered by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee at its next meeting.

(c) Key Objectives 2012/13

Mid-year progress against the Council's Key Objectives for 2012/13, which reflect national and local priorities, specific service challenges, and provide a statement of the authority's plans for the year, will be reported to the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November/December 2012.

Technology

(a) Wireless network coverage to Civic Offices

A number of suppliers will be demonstrating their systems to ICT within the next few weeks. The aim is to provide site wide wireless internet/network coverage across the whole Civic Office site within this financial year.

(b) Increase in Internet connection speed

ICT are currently negotiating with suppliers to increase the current 10Mb internet bandwidth connection. With more systems and users requiring access to internet based sites, the current connection is nearing full utilisation. Due to increased competition between suppliers, initial indications are that speed can be increased to at least 30Mb at no extra cost.

ICT Restructure

As technology changes a minor restructure has become necessary, putting extra resource into Security and Server areas. This has been achieved by deleting vacant posts where workload has reduced. A much stronger structure is now in place generating revenue savings of approximately £14,000.

Wireless Broadband – Service available to the public

In my previous report to Council I confirmed that the beneficial side effect of work on business continuity meant that a wireless broadband service was now available for the public and businesses to subscribe to. It was felt important to ensure that there was no confusion about the Council playing an active role in providing or recommending this service so my report included the statement below -

The Council will not be actively promoting this service ahead of any other broadband provider, but if anyone would like further information or to register an interest, please visit their website <http://www.fibrewifi.com>

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 16 October, Members felt more should be done to increase awareness about the availability of this service. Following this request, I have asked Officers to look at how additional publicity can be provided whilst continuing to make it clear that this service is an independent commercial venture and that any contracts are between Buzcom and the subscriber and do not involve this Council.

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Report to the Council

Subject: Planning

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Bassett

Date: 6 November 2012

Recommending:

That the report of the Planning Portfolio Holder be noted

Local Plan

The Local Plan consultation, Community Choice – Issues and Options, commenced on 30 July and finished on 15 October. I would like to thank the Forward Planning team who have done an incredible amount of work to publicise and to assist people responding to the consultation. I attended several of the resident drop-in sessions and also, in the last week, attended two parish council meetings for residents in Sheering and Nazeing. At these parish meetings I met and answered questions from over two hundred residents to help them understand what the consultation is about and to again confirm that no decisions have been made.

In total we had just over 1000 residents attend the drop-in sessions and the I have published in the Bulletin details on all the extensive methods we have used to publicise the consultation.

We have started to process the approximately 6000 responses we have received. Obviously this will take some time and we are looking at ways we can enter the data more easily to speed up the process. As mentioned previously once we have compiled the responses we will be holding a series of three workshops for members, county councillors and representatives from the parishes. These workshops are being held to involve members and key officers in the process of narrowing down the options for the strategy for developing the district, with a fourth to be held later and will consider the implications of further evidence and a preferred option for the emerging plan to be published in Summer 2013.

The workshops will give members an opportunity to get to grips with the issues involved in plan making and the evidence - including what the people of the district had to say about "Community Choices" for the plan. The workshops will give key service managers a further opportunity to ensure that their strategies are integrated in plan making.

These interactive workshops are designed to result in a report to the Local Plan Cabinet Committee early in 2013 to give a steer for the officers to focus the next stage of detailed flood risk, transport and sustainability assessments prior to the selection of a preferred strategy.

Growth Meeting with Harlow

It has been agreed we will be having a meeting with the leadership of Harlow District on 13 November where we will discuss how both councils will go forward and look at areas in planning and

development where we can cooperate. The Leader and Chief Executive will also be at this meeting and I shall report back to Council with a progress report after the meeting.

South East Local Enterprise Partnership

On October 12 I attended a meeting of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. A wide range of topics were discussed from how the Strategic Transport Infrastructure Group (STIG) would help create, prepare governance and operating proposals for a newly created Local Transport Body. This board will be responsible for about £150m of investment in the LEP area over the next 5 years.

We also discussed proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing. The Director reported that at the September meeting of the Thames Gateway Strategic Group Brandon Lewis, the new Thames Gateway Minister, asked if local authority colleagues could reach a consensus on a proposed route for a new crossing. In light of those discussions, the LEP was offered as an 'honest broker' with the aim of exploring if and how far consensus could be reached, exploring private funding options, and bringing business views into consideration.

Discussions were then held about the Enterprise Zones. With regards to Harlow the meeting was updated on the situation on Med Tech at Harlow and noted that:

- Meetings are on-going with the Highways Agency to resolve concerns with traffic modelling;
- Harlow DC are about to appoint consultants who will market the site; and
- A data centre being built on part of the site, at the boundary, although not offering new jobs will generate business rates.

The enterprise zone and jobs will be part of the discussions with the Growth meeting with Harlow in November. A full copy of the minutes will be available if required.

Northern Gateway Access Package (NGAP)

The North East Enfield Area Action Plan is a document presently at consultation until 8 November 2012. As a document intended to support the planning of a complex area of an adjoining Borough it contains many proposals of merit, and where one might expect an adjacent Planning Authority would be supportive of the strategic approach and the tactics to be employed to achieve the intended actions.

The London Borough of Enfield (LBE) have aspired to a direct or indirect route for traffic using the North South Road (A1055) or Mollison Avenue to the J26 M25 for many years.

The North South Road serves many employment sites and activities within the northern part of Enfield, as well as allowing access to a variety of residential communities. It passes through a substantial residential community around Bullsmoor Lane before that Lane meets with the A10 a little way south of Junction 25 of the M25. At this northern end of the Borough that is a congested, but longstanding, arrangement for traffic to access the M25 and the strategic highway network. In pursuing their aspiration LBE developed a scheme called Northern Gateway Access Road (NGAR) which was submitted for planning and other approvals some sixteen years ago. This route is again being proposed as an "alternative route" to the M25 via J26 and would link the North South Road to the A121. We obviously are very concerned about this and are making our objections know. I will be

bringing a report to Cabinet shortly which will explain in detail the situation and our suggested response. I have a copy of the consultation document if people want to read it.

Sainsbury Judicial Review

When the Sainsbury depot at Waltham Point was granted planning permission Members required there to be a section 106 which controlled lorry movements via M25 rather than local roads.

In respect of deliveries to the Debden and Loughton stores there are also more specific local restrictions which effectively require access to use the M25 and the M11 rather than a more direct route on local roads. This means that Sainsbury lorries complying with the section 106 requirements would not be able to turn right off Chigwell Lane to access the Debden Broadway store if the presently approved scheme for improving Pyrles lane was implemented as part of the Langston Road development

Three options are available to remedy the situation

- Take a longer route around the Broadway. This is obviously undesirable.
- Amend the arrangement on the approved Polofind highway works. This is being worked on.
- Amend the section 106 routing restriction to this store.

After the last District Development Control Committee meeting, Sainsbury was to enable to explain their predicament to Members and, in particular, to press the case for the last of those three options.

The entire DDCC and a good number of members from Loughton and Waltham Abbey were present. Even though work will continue on the options Sainsbury's have now indicated they are asking for a judicial review of the 106 routing restriction. Judicial reviews would take a long time to come to court and if a solution is found then it would not be required. Sainsbury's have stated the routing restrictions to the above stores (plus the stores at Woodford and Chingford) add about a tankers worth of fuel to their operating costs each and every year; but they are not challenging the general restrictions on Waltham Point. I will ensure members are kept aware of developments.

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Stansted Airport – Proposed Charges

“This Council deplores the decision to impose a minimum charge of £2 per car on those who drop off airline passengers within walking distance of the terminal at Stansted Airport, considering this an unfair impost on those who have no reasonable means of travelling to the airport by public transport. It finds it totally unacceptable that a discount scheme should apply to residents of Uttlesford and East Hertfordshire Districts but not to residents of the Epping Forest District, many of whom live considerably closer to the airport than most residents of the other two neighbouring districts.

The Council calls on the Leader to make representations to the Stansted Airport authorities on this matter”.

Mover: Councillor J Knapman

Seconder: Councillor G. Waller

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Questions by Members Under Notice

(i) Sainsbury's Site, Loughton Broadway

Question from Councillor Girling to Councillor Grigg

"Upon attending the presentation by Sainsbury's on Wednesday 3rd October I was shocked to hear that if the Council cannot agree to remove the current restrictions on Sainsbury's deliveries to the Debden Store (deliveries amount to two lorries per day), they will have to consider closing the much needed local store. This store serves local elderly and disabled residents that are unable to travel to Loughton or Epping to complete their weekly shopping.

As a new councillor I was further surprised by the way experienced members responded to Sainsbury's comments and implied they were "fine" if the store was to close.

Could the Portfolio Holder provide reassurance to my constituents that the Cabinet and Officers are committed to finding suitable solutions to the Sainsbury's Debden Store delivery issue and will they reassure my constituents that regardless of Sainsbury's decision there will be a small supermarket on the same site should Sainsbury's vacate and terminate their lease agreement"?

(ii) CCTV Awareness Campaign

Question from Councillor Girling to Councillor Waller

"I recently visited the Council's Safer Communities team and viewed the newly installed Debden CCTV. I am most grateful to members and officers that such a service exists around The Broadway shopping area.

Can I request that the Portfolio Holder works in conjunction with Councillor Grigg and officers in the Safer Communities Team to host an event (perhaps at Epping Forest College) to demonstrate the new CCTV system to the Broadway Traders and sessions at schools in the Loughton Broadway Ward to raise its profile, provide reassurance and act as a deterrent towards future cases of Anti Social Behaviour in The Broadway shopping area"?

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