

Supplementary Council Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Council Tuesday, 3rd November, 2009

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
Room: Council Chamber
Time: 7.30 pm
Committee Secretary: Council Secretary: Ian Willett
Tel: 01992 564243 Email: iwillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

7. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 3 - 12)

To receive the attached reports from the Community Safety and Transport Portfolio Holder, the Environment Portfolio Holder, Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder and the Performance Management Portfolio Holder on matters falling within their area of responsibility.

9. MOTIONS (Pages 13 - 14)

To consider the attached motions, notice of which has been given under Council Procedure Rule 11.

10. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE (Pages 15 - 16)

To answer the attached question to the Leader of the Council asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 10.3 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.

Council Procedure rule 10.4 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.

Report to the Council

Committee: Council

Date: 3 November 2009

Subject: Community Safety and Transport Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ms S-A Stavrou **Item:** 7(c)

Recommending:

That the report of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Transport be noted.

Safer Communities Partnership

The Safer Communities Partnership receives applications to fund various projects falling within its remit to reduce crime and disorder in the district. These may include such diverse projects as assisting publication of residents newsletters; the installation or extension of CCTV systems; community events that promote partnership working; Essex Police Do the Right Thing (educating school children about knife crime) and Essex County Fire & Rescue's Firebreak and Firefighter Courses (a youth initiative for selected youngsters). All successful applicants are requested to complete monitoring and evaluation forms at the end of the project which provides a useful tool in determining where resources should be spent to achieve the best possible results and value for money.

Not in My Neighbourhood Week takes place from the 2nd – 6th November. There is an extensive programme of crime reduction measures/education planned for that week and the schedule can be viewed on the Council's website and will be published in the Council Bulletin.

There will be a special Crime & Disorder Scrutiny meeting on the 27th October. The items to be discussed are the cross border effects of anti-social behaviour and dispersal orders and the protection of vulnerable individuals and families from targeted anti social behaviour. There will be a verbal update of the findings of this meeting on the night of full Council.

For Halloween and Bonfire Night there will be close liaison between Essex Police operations and our Safer Communities Team to assist with public reassurance.

Olympics

Good progress is being made on the White Water Canoe Centre site where construction started in July this year. Land formation works to form the canoe course embankment and the landscaped features of the venue are over half way complete. Piling work is now underway for form the foundations of the Olympic starting pool and the venue's facility building. The venue is being built on a 10 hectare site, covering

an area the equivalent of 25 full-size football pitches. The latest construction and design images of the White Water Canoe Centre can be viewed and downloaded from <http://mm.gettyimages.com/mm/nicePath/locog?nav=pr129287534>.

Highways

The Epping Parking Review – analysis completed with Essex County Council, comments discussed and agreed with the District Council on 13 October 2009 and returned to the ECC Portfolio Holder Councillor Norman Hume to be signed off and the legalities commenced. There will be a further 21 days once notices have been posted in which to lodge an objection before the order is binding.

Buckhurst Hill – public consultation is now complete. Analysis being undertaken by ECC on comments received.

Loughton Broadway Parking – Public consultation underway.

Local Highways Panel

The next meeting of the Local Highways Panel is on 24th November.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 3 November 2009

Subject: Environment Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mrs Mary Sartin

Item: 7(d)

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management Service

The figures for the first month of the new waste service look very encouraging. The recycling level for the month of September, which includes three weeks of the new service is around 57%, and for the first three weeks of the new service alone, the level is just over 60%. This has taken our overall recycling level for the year to date to just over 47%, from a starting point of 43%. I hope, as time moves on, to see recycling levels approach and even exceed 50% for the municipal year as a whole. Equally encouraging is a substantial drop in the amount of waste going to landfill, with the first three weeks of the service showing a 28% reduction. I would like to thank the residents of the District for embracing the new service so wholeheartedly.

That is not to say that there are not still some difficulties with the new service. Whilst the numbers of calls into the Environment & Street Scene Directorate have reduced significantly, they remain higher than normal. There are particular difficulties with some households still awaiting their food and garden waste bin or a smaller bin. I would like to apologise to residents who have waited a long time, but this has been due to unprecedented high levels of workload and the logistical problems which inevitably arise when trying to distribute some 50,000 wheeled bins and caddies.

Inter Authority Agreement

The Inter Authority Agreement has now been signed by all the Essex Districts (bar Colchester) and this, alongside the news that the Essex Waste Partnership had been awarded £100 million of PFI credits was celebrated at County Hall last week. The County Cabinet Member with responsibility for waste matters, Councillor Mrs Chapman, praised all of the districts for the invaluable work of their members and officers in developing and adopting the IAA and successfully obtaining unconditional PFI funding.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 3 November 2009

Subject: Finance & Economic Development Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris Whitbread

Item: 7(e)

Recommending:

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

National Non Domestic Rating Scheme

Members will be aware that the non domestic rates a business pays are calculated by multiplying the rateable value of their property by a rate in the pound (the multiplier) set by the Government. Every five years business properties are re-valued by the Valuation Office Agency to keep the tax base up to date. This is a national exercise and is intended to be revenue neutral across the country as a whole. However, as property values have increased relatively more in and around London than in the rest of the country the share of the tax paid by business in and around London is proposed to increase. After allowing for the proposed transitional scheme the East Midlands is the greatest beneficiary with a reduction of 4% in its share whilst London is the biggest loser with an increase of 3%.

Many local businesses have contacted me to express their concern at the letters they have received from the Valuation Office Agency. These letters give the new property values from the draft list but do not make businesses aware of the reduction in the multiplier which will also be taking place. The draft multiplier and draft scheme of transitional relief will not be announced until mid November and these are unlikely to be confirmed as final until mid January 2010.

I am proposing a Motion later in the agenda which calls on the Government to carefully consider the impact on businesses of the revaluation and asks that when they set the final terms of the new scheme they make the greatest possible reduction in the multiplier, limit increases in bills to no more than 2.5% and double the limits that restrict entitlement to small business rate relief.

Implementing the new scheme will also cause difficulty for our officers as they are already working with an amended scheme for 2009/10. Members may recall that after the bills had already been despatched for 2009/10 the Government introduced a scheme that allowed for the deferment of 60% of the increase in 2009/10 rate bills to 2010/11 and 2011/12. Whilst the general principle of the scheme was welcomed the timing was not helpful and with a revaluation on top of bills including deferred increases it will become difficult for businesses to understand their bills.

A separate issue to the national revaluation is the "correction" of rateable values for a number of businesses in Buckhurst Hill. The Valuation Office Agency have stated that these businesses have previously been incorrectly undervalued and now they have realised their mistake corrected higher valuations have been issued. I urge any

businesses that have been affected by the amended valuations to consider appealing against the new valuation.

Local Business

This Council previously agreed to sign up to the Small Business Engagement Accord that has been developed by the Federation of Small Businesses and I am delighted that the formal signing of the Accord has taken place this evening. The Council continues to work closely with the FSB and the Chamber of Commerce and an excellent event to help businesses boost sales took place in Theydon Bois on 22 October. The event was attended by nearly 100 different businesses and a lot of positive feedback has been received.

I have previously provided assurances about the Council's procurement practices and the level of our spend with local and small businesses and I am pleased to be able to confirm that in 2008/09 56.28% of this Council's spend went to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). This compares with 51.70% for district councils generally and 49.62% for authorities in the East of England.

The average local share of spend as a percentage of spend for 2008/09 was 19.06%, which compares with an average of 16.25% for district councils generally. Whilst we must give proper regard to our duty to achieve Best Value and make savings, these figures demonstrate that the Council will do business with SMEs and local firms where possible to support our local economy.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 3 November 2009

Subject: Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Brian Rolfe

Item: 7(h)

Recommending:

That the report of the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted.

As advised at full Council in September, I have arranged for a DVD presentation of the Council's Community Services activity programme, to be shown prior to full Council from 7.00pm until 7.10pm, in the Council Chamber.

The DVD will provide members with an overview of some of the services provided through this Portfolio, including photographic and video footage of the 2009 Summer Holiday Activity Programme; regular weekly activities offered to local children and young people living in Super Output areas of the District; images from the roll out of the Big Lottery Funded Play Facilities improvement programme and a sample of Active Health activities provided for older people.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 3 November 2009

Subject: Performance Management Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Richard Bassett

Item 7(i)

Recommending:

That the report of the Performance Management Portfolio Holder be noted.

My report this month is fairly short as much of it is work in progress.

I have been working with several groups to start a review process to allow the Council to maintain front line service delivery yet get better value for money. We have already committed to have a Council Tax increase of less than 2.5% and this will require the Council to find £300k in savings. To this end we have created a Sub-Group of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee to look at budgets, priorities and initiatives which can be reviewed from a performance and value for money perspective. The Group will be myself, Chris Whitbread, Derek Macnab and Bob Palmer. The first meeting of this Group will be held on 5 November.

I also have been part of the Group reviewing the tenders for the provision of insurance broking services. This is an important area for the Council and also an area where if managed properly could save the Council a considerable amount of money. We have interviewed three possible companies who have tendered for the business. We also have received some information about an active collaboration project between a small group of local authorities in our region. This is supported by our regional Procurement East Network (PEN) who wished to explore the potential for collaborative procurement of Insurance Services. If we take this collaboration approach we will have a much larger purchasing power with the insurance companies and hence should get a better deal. I will provide an update in due course.

Work is also progressing on the Building Maintenance Strategy and a report of possible projects, costings and priorities will be presented to Cabinet shortly. The plan is to make everything happen within the agreed budgets and to concentrate on vital works.

I also have started to review the improvement plans for the Key Performance Indicators which is quite a lot work but we need to be smart in working out how we can improve our performance without putting a strain on budgets.

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Motions

(b) National Non Domestic Rating Scheme – Amendments from 1 April 2010

“That this Council -

calls on the Government to consider carefully the impact of the revaluation of business properties on businesses in the current economic climate and in setting the final terms of the scheme:

- (i) reduces the multiplier to the greatest possible extent and in any event by at least 20%;
- (ii) increases the scheme of transitional relief so that no business, regardless of size, should have a bill that is more than 2.5% bigger in 2010/11 than their bill for 2009/10;
- (iii) doubles the limits that restrict entitlement to small business rate relief”.

Mover: Councillor C Whitbread
Seconder: Councillor Mrs D Collins

(c) 10:10 Campaign – Cutting the Council's Carbon Emissions

“This Council resolves to:

- (a) sign up to the 10:10 campaign (www.1010uk.org) which calls for 10 per cent greenhouse gas emission reductions by the end of 2010;
- (b) seek to cut its emissions by 10 per cent in 2010; and
- (c) encourage other individuals, businesses and organisations in the Epping Forest District to do likewise”.

Mover: Councillor J M Whitehouse
Seconder: Councillor R Frankel

(d) Queens Road Business Rates and Support for Town Centres

“This Council:

- (a) notes that traders in Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill have been subjected to a massive increase in their business rates;
- (b) recognises that whilst offering the ratepayers more time to pay the increased bills, it has no power to reduce the amount due;
- (c) believes that traders would benefit from the advice and support of a Town Centre Manager, especially at this time of economic recession, and that the viability of the road as a trading centre needs all the help that can be provided by the Council; and

(d) requests that the Cabinet provides temporary cover for the post of Town Centre Manager until the current post-holder is able to return to work”.

Mover: Councillor Mrs A Haigh
Seconder: Councillor Mrs J Sutcliffe

Questions by Members under Notice

(a) Staff Vacancies

By Councillor J M Whitehouse to Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council

“Please list those posts on the Establishment which are:

- (a) vacant;
- (b) have been vacant for three months or longer;
- (c) have been vacant for six months or longer.

Please identify which of the above posts are:

- (a) currently the subject of an active recruitment process;
- (b) currently have no activity planned;
- (c) are subject to a recruitment freeze”.

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