

Supplementary Council Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Council Tuesday, 22nd December, 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

8. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 3 - 10)

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

10. MOTIONS (Pages 11 - 12)

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

11. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE (Pages 13 - 14)

To answer the attached questions 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:

- (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 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: 22 December 2009

Subject: Community Safety and Transport Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ms S-A Stavrou **Item:** 8(c)

Recommending:

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

Highways

(a) M25 Highways Widening Scheme

Although not strictly my portfolio, members may have seen the Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint Venture project newsletter for the M25 junctions 25-30 Widening Scheme which appeared in my inbox the other day. If interested, members can access it on line at www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/5739.aspx. There is also a community helpline on 01708 256000 or email communityrelations27-30.m25@sbbjv.co.uk. The newsletter appears in pdf format.

(b) Local Highways Panel The last meeting of the Local Highways Panel was on Tuesday 24 November and the Panel received a presentation from the County Roads Manager, Lawrence McKeogh reporting on the Highways Maintenance Strategy. The ECC pledge for 2009/10 had been determined to improve residential streets and a total budget of £10 million pounds had been allocated for highways across the County. The allocation of capital and revenue funding was determined by The County Roads Manager.

The Panel also received a presentation from the Highways Liaison Officer, Rosa Tanfield who reported on highways issues with Epping Forest District. The majority of capital funded highway maintenance schemes had been completed and the capital budget for 2009/10 had been fully committed. The County Council Cabinet member for Highways and Transportation, Councillor Norman Hume, had provisionally approved an additional £4 million pounds of capital finance for highways maintenance in 2009/10 which would provide Epping Forest District with £659K for schemes.

The CIF bidding process for 2009/10 had now closed and 20 applications from the EF District had been submitted. Highways officers would now carry out the viability analysis and estimates to be submitted with the applications, which would be judged in March/April 2010.

Panel members were advised that the highways ranger service had been reduced to 6 months (the programme had been split equally between Epping Forest District Council and Harlow Council for 2008/09 as ECC were only able to provide 6 months funding). It was anticipated that the highways ranger service would resume next year, funding permitting,

and the Panel expressed an interest in having more control over the work schedule and timing.

The Area Highways Manager presented the Panel with the officers' assessments of the programme of works 2010/11 for Carriageways, Footways and Traffic Improvement requests and the Area Highways Manger explained that the budget would dictate the amount of schemes that would be included in 2009/10 programme of works. The Panel agreed the priority 1 and 2 schemes to be costed and assessed for the next meeting. This programme included Parish and Town Councils' requests, other works that the ECC officers had identified and previous suggestions received.

A full set of the minutes of this meeting will be available to all members on the website and the date of the next meeting is Tuesday 26 January 2010 in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices.

Parking Reviews

The formal public consultation process for Epping and Buckhurst Hill will start after Christmas following the publication of Traffic Regulation Orders. If you would like to see a copy of the amended maps for these areas please contact Kim Durrani in the Environment & Street Scene Directorate. Debden Loughton Broadway initial consultation responses are still being assessed.

Safer Communities

The Epping Forest District Safer Communities Partnership met on 14 December. Various matters were discussed at length including amongst others the Essex Probation Payback Scheme, Governance, the Constitution of the Panel, Funding applications, and Prevent – part of the Government's anti-terrorism strategy.

Following a successful pilot scheme at St John's School in Epping, a "Reality Roadshow" was delivered at Debden Park School last week. "Reality Roadshow" is targeted at year 9 students and provides them with knowledge and understanding across a number of key issues, including drug and alcohol abuse, road safety, internet safety, sexual health, bullying and dealing with peer pressures. This is a natural extension to "Crucial Crew" which provides similar training but is targeted at the younger year 6 students. We hope to provide "Reality Roadshow" at a number of secondary schools in the future.

The Safer Communities public event held at Waltham Abbey in November was a great success. All who attended appeared to enjoy the information provided and exhibitions given by a number of safer communities partners and the evening "question time" proved to be challenging for those on the panel. A poll of those who attended indicated that the top local priorities were anti-social behaviour, road safety, drug related crime and burglary. The Partnership will ensure these are considered as part of next year's strategic assessment.

Whilst crime currently remains higher than our target reduction of 5% (on last years excellent 8% reduction), the numbers of actual crimes still remain at a level lower than at this time last year. A lot of emphasis is currently being given to dealing with domestic burglary as well as cross border criminality.

LVRPA

The LVRPA is consulting about its Park Development Framework and has asked for views and opinions. Please have a look at the site on www.leevalleypark.org.uk/pdfconsultation and forward your comments to LVRPA on www.leevalleypark.org.uk

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 22 December 2009

Subject: Environment Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mrs Mary Sartin **Item:** 8(d)

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management Service

We are now three and a half months into the new service and most of the earlier problems have been resolved and the service appears to be running quite smoothly. Several people within my own ward have made very favourable comments regarding the service we are now offering and hopefully other members have been aware of similar feelings within their areas. Recycling figures to the end of October indicate a recycling rate of 58% compared with the 43% we were achieving under the old scheme, however, I would just add a word of caution in that current evaluations indicate an end of year figure nearer to 54%.

Call numbers have reduced dramatically from the high figures which were being reached in the run up to, and during the early days of, the new service but have now settled down to a more normal level. With the Christmas holiday period now upon us I would urge residents to refer to their calendars for revised collection dates or to look for the information on the Council's website.

The assessment process has now been developed for the issuing of a second food and garden waste wheelie bin. Around 400 requests have been received and officers will contact these residents to arrange for an assessment. With this number of requests it will take some time to work through the list and I would ask residents to be patient.

Street Trading

Some local traders have approached the Environment and Neighbourhood enforcement team regarding the sale of Christmas trees from the roadside as they feel this is having an effect on their legitimate businesses. Officers have made some test purchases and as a result about five traders are being investigated.

Members' Visits

I am very conscious that I have not yet come forward with dates for visits to recycling facilities. I raised this issue again at the last Waste Management Partnership Board

and am now awaiting dates for the New Year from Sita. As soon as these are received they will be published in the Members' Bulletin.

Planning Directorate Staffing

After a period of considerable problems around staffing within the Planning and Economic Development Directorate several vacancies have now been filled. As some of these have been internal appointments there are still a few more posts to be filled. The staffing structure has now been published as part of the Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel agenda for 5 January 2010. Any member who wishes to access this document can do so through the Council's website.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 22 December 2009

Subject: Performance Management Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Richard Bassett

Item 8(i)

Recommending:

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

Work on areas where we may be able to improve efficiency or save money has been progressing. An initial report to the Performance Management/Finance and Economic Development Committee on 23 November was presented. The report has identified several initial areas for review of consideration and I am meeting with relevant managers to discuss how the reviews can be accommodated.

A summary of Areas Suitable for Review

1. Forester – it was felt that the current exercise to tender for printing and distribution could be expanded to cover the outsourcing of the editorial role. A saving of £40,000 was identified as a target with the review to be led by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Leader.
2. Members – concern was expressed about the growth in the number of meetings and whether 58 remained an appropriate number of Members for the Council. A target saving was not identified and it was acknowledged that a review to reduce the number of Members might take a number of years to complete. However, a review was felt necessary and, as he has previously examined this issue, the Assistant to the Chief Executive is to be invited to lead the review with the Leader.
3. Police Community Support Officers - the Council entered into the commitment to jointly fund 6 PCSOs prior to the heavy investment in the Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative and the expansion of the Safer Communities Team. It was felt appropriate that the funding for the PCSOs should be negotiated down in a tapered way over a period of time. The appropriate Chief Officer and Portfolio Holder to take this forward are the Director of Environment and Street Scene and the Community Safety and Transport Portfolio Holder.
4. Insurance – a tendering exercise is currently underway as a collaborative procurement with 8 other authorities. This is being co-ordinated by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and a target saving of £100,000 has been identified (with a minimum of £60,000 of the saving relating to the General Fund). This work is being led by the Director of Finance and ICT and the Performance Management Portfolio Holder.
5. Voluntary Sector – it was felt that the grants to Voluntary Action Epping Forest, Citizen's Advice Bureau and the women's refuge should be protected but at their current level. The area suitable for review here is the process by which grants are administered as it was felt that this could be streamlined or handled by a third party. The appropriate people for this review are the Assistant to the Chief Executive and the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder.

6. Information Centre – there was no desire to withdraw services from remote locations but it was felt that a review could consider the appropriateness of current locations. Specifically, a review considering the relocation of the Information Centre in Waltham Abbey from the Town Hall to the library might be beneficial. This review should be conducted by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Leader.
7. Print/Messenger Service – concern over value for money had been highlighted by an Internal Audit report. It was felt that a review should be conducted by the Director of Corporate Support Services and the Performance Management Portfolio Holder to examine the greater use of electronic access and possible outsourcing.
8. Secretarial Bureau/Land Charges – Members felt a review covering efficiency and value for money should be conducted by the Director of Corporate Support Services and the Performance Management Portfolio Holder.
9. Legal Services – the Group were unsure why the Council were not participating in the shared services arrangements involving Essex County Council and most other districts in Essex. A review was felt appropriate to cover working with this shared service and examining other models of service delivery. This review should be led by the Director of Corporate Support Services and the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder.
10. Building Control – the Planning Services Standing Scrutiny Panel have already initiated a review to consider a shared service and alternative models of service delivery. The need for this review was agreed and it is suggested that this Committee keeps the work of the Standing Scrutiny Panel under review.
11. Grounds Maintenance/Country Care/Nursery – it was felt that a review of these areas should concentrate on the combining of functions/management, ensuring full cost recovery from the Housing Revenue Account and Essex County Council and evaluating the direct purchasing of stock. This review should be led by the Director of Environment and Street Scene and the Environment Portfolio Holder.
12. Leisure and Young People – spending on Community Arts, the Museum, Sports Development and Community Development is currently £1.1 million. A target saving of £100,000 was identified from these areas, with the review to be led by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder.
13. Depot Rationalization/Property Development – the Working Group noted the work of the officer asset management group and the projects underway to either reduce costs or create new income streams. It is suggested that this Committee keeps the work of the asset management group under review.

I should again state that this list is review areas and following a review we may not be able to identify savings. I would also like to ask members if they have ideas for other areas of review I would gladly investigate them.

Motions

(a) Epping Forest District Council Organisational Assessment

“This Council -

- (a) notes with concern the content of the Epping Forest District Council Organisational Assessment published by the Audit Commission on 9 December 2009, which gives the District Council a score of 2 out of 4 for every element of the assessment (“meets only minimum requirements, performs adequately”);
- (b) notes, in particular, the references to:
 - (i) a weak track record of improvement;
 - (ii) slow payment of benefits;
 - (iii) tensions between some senior officers and some councillors; and
 - (iv) a need to focus more on value for money and quality of service delivery;
- (c) recognises the hard work and commitment of staff and that the assessment records some areas of good performance including:
 - (i) providing services to Council tenants
 - (ii) working in partnership with other organisations to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour;
- (d) believes nevertheless that Epping Forest District residents deserve better than a Council which meets only minimum requirements; and
- (e) resolves:
 - (1) That as a matter of priority the Cabinet should work with officers to identify the actions required to address the areas of under-performance highlighted in the assessment and that these should be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion;
 - (2) That actions to address the areas of under-performance should be included in the Key Priority Objectives for 2010/11;
 - (3) That the financial implications be considered as part of the current budget-making process; and
 - (4) That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee should keep under review the Council’s response to the assessment”.

Proposer: Councillor Jon Whitehouse

Secunder: Councillor Ann Haigh

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Questions by Members under Notice

(a) Fixed Penalty Notices – Littering including Cigarette Butts

By Councillor D Dodeja to Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

(1) Do the Council's Environment and Neighbourhood Officers have the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to deal with the dropping of cigarette butts and other types of litter; and If so, what is the Fixed Penalty Charge and how many have been issued? If not does she have any plans to follow the lead of councils which use Fixed Penalty Notices of around £80 to deal with the dropping of cigarette butts and other litter in public areas?

(2) How many waste bins with cigarette receptacles are provided by the District Council, broken down by parish?

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