

# Supplementary Committee Agenda



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

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## **Cabinet Monday, 1st February, 2010**

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

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Democratic Services:** Gary Woodhall (The Office of the Chief Executive)  
Email: gwoodhall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk  
Tel: 01992 564470

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**13. REPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROUP (Pages 3 - 6)**

(Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel) To consider the attached addendum report (C-074a-2009/10).

**24. CORPORATE PLAN, MEDIUM TERM AIMS 2010/11- 2013/14 AND KEY PRIORITIES 2010/11 (Pages 7 - 20)**

(Performance Management Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached additional Appendix to the report (C-089-2009/10).

**26. FINANCE & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CABINET COMMITTEE - 25 JANUARY 2010 (Pages 21 - 28)**

(Finance & Economic Development Portfolio Holder) To consider the minutes from the recent meeting of the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee held on 25 January 2010 and the recommendations therein (C-087-2009/10).

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## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-074a-2009/10  
**Date of meeting:** 1 February 2010



**Portfolio:** Housing  
**Subject:** Use of Existing Budget for Open Market Shared Ownership  
**Responsible Officer:** Alan Hall (01992 564004).  
**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

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### **ADDENDUM REPORT TO AGENDA ITEM 13**

#### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

That, in the event that it is not possible to identify an RSL that wishes to undertake an Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme in partnership with the Council, the existing budget of £350,000 for the scheme be utilised to supplement the proposed budgets for two of the proposals put forward by the Scrutiny Panel, as follows:

- (1) An additional £168,000 to enable a further six Home Ownership Grants of £28,000 each; and
- (2) An additional £182,000 to enable the selected housing association to purchase a further two or three 2/3 bedroom houses from the open market, in order to let them at affordable rents to Council nominees.

#### **Executive Summary:**

In view of the negative response from three Homebuy agents and two of the Council's Preferred RSLs Partners, the Scrutiny Panel has agreed an alternate recommendation to the Cabinet on the proposed use of the £350,000 capital budget for the Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme, in the event that it is not possible to identify an RSL that wishes to undertake such a scheme in partnership with the Council.

#### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

As set out in the Executive Summary.

#### **Other Options for Action:**

As set out in the body of the report

#### **Report:**

1. This is an Addendum Report from the Housing Scrutiny Panel, discussed at its last meeting on 21 January 2010, and supplements the report from the Scrutiny Panel at Agenda Item 13 on the Cabinet's main agenda.

2. The main Agenda Item sets out the report of the Affordable Housing Group on ways of increasing the amount of affordable housing within the District. One of the Housing Scrutiny Panel's recommendations to the Cabinet is that the £350,000 budget provision already agreed by the Cabinet to invest in an Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme should be retained within the Capital Programme, and that the Director of Housing should contact other Homebuy agents to discuss the possibility of an existing Homebuy Agent working with the Council to operate either the scheme previously proposed in partnership with Moat Housing, or an alternate scheme, similar to the Government's MyChoice Homebuy Scheme, but with the Council undertaking the role of the Homes and Communities Agency.

3. Since the original meeting of the Scrutiny Panel, the Director of Housing has approached two other Homebuy agents - Orbit and Aldwyck. However, both have said that they are not interested in operating such a scheme, since (as with Moat), they wish to concentrate on new build developments.

4. We were advised at our last meeting held on 21 January 2010 that, for this reason, the Director of Housing had subsequently approached the Council's remaining four Preferred RSL Partners, to see if they would be interested in working in partnership on such a scheme. Two responded by saying that they would not be interested. The remaining two RSLs (L&Q and East Thames), both of whom have active shared ownership arms, are due to consider the issue at internal meetings. However, we were advised that at least one of these meetings would not be held until 3 February – after the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2010.

5. In view of the negative response from the three Homebuy agents and two of the Council's Preferred RSLs Partners, the Scrutiny Panel considered and agreed an alternative recommendation to the Cabinet on the proposed use of the £350,000 capital budget for the Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme, in the event that it is not possible to identify an RSL that wishes to undertake such a scheme in partnership with the Council.

6. In his report to the Scrutiny Panel, the Director of Housing identified 9 possible options that the Scrutiny Panel could consider submitting to the Cabinet. In summary, these covered the following:

(a) continue to seek an RSL that would be interested in operating the proposed scheme (or similar);

(b) withdraw the budget for a capital housing purpose, and allow it to be used by the Council for other purposes, or to retain in capital balances;

(c) use the budget to either fund or supplement the costs of one or both of the proposals put forward to the Cabinet to provide further Home Ownership Grants in 2010/11, and/or to provide social housing grant to a housing association to purchase properties from the open market to let at affordable rents; or

(d) use the budget for some other housing purpose, to increase the amount of affordable housing in the District.

7. On discussion, we agreed to recommend to the Cabinet as set out in the Recommendations.

**Resource Implications:**

Use of the existing budget of £350,000 for an Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

Housing Act 1985.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None.

**Background Papers:**

Correspondence with RSLs.

**Impact Assessments:**

Risk Management

As set out in the main report to the Cabinet

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

N/A

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?

N/A

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**DRAFT CABINET KEY OBJECTIVES 2010/11**

Key Objective	Action(s)	Target(s)/How Measured	Link to Medium-Term Aims, the Budget for 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents
<p>(1) To deliver a sound Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework;</p>	<p>(a) To publish an issues and options consultation for the Core Strategy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• options for urban extensions to Harlow to contribute to Regional Spatial Strategy targets, which are generally in line with Policy HA1;</li> <li>• options for the distribution of new housing elsewhere in the district to meet the Council's housing targets identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy;</li> <li>• options for new employment land to meet Regional Spatial Strategy targets;</li> <li>• options to deal with any other issues raised in the Sustainable Community Strategy which have spatial implications;</li> </ul> <p>(b) To establish formal arrangements to achieve co-ordinated working on the Core Strategies for the East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest and Harlow Districts;</p> <p>(c) To continue to deliver further</p>	<p>(a) The publication of an issues and options consultation for the Core Strategy by 1 September 2010;</p> <p>(b) The establishment of formal arrangements for co-ordinated working with East Hertfordshire and Harlow District Councils by 31 December 2010;</p> <p>(c) The provision of thirty-four additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(d) The holding of a joint member/officer meeting with the Minister for Housing and Planning by 20 April 2010;</p> <p>(e) The meeting of any agreed targets for the provision of additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches following the joint member/officer meeting with the Minister for Housing and Planning, by 31 March 2011;</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 3 – Be an innovative and a top performing Council in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets;</p> <p>Aim 5 – Community Leadership and Advocacy;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>The District Development Fund budget for 2009/10 and the two subsequent years includes £1.176m to support this key objective. The budget includes the use of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant and Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme funding;</p> <p>The Local Development Framework Links directly to the Sustainable Community Strategy for the district,</p>

Key Objective	Action(s)	Target(s)/How Measured	Link to Medium-Term Aims, the Budget for 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents
	<p>permanent accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers as required by the Direction of the Minister for Housing and Planning in 2007, through the provision of 34 pitches (net) or until any subsequent agreement is reached with the Government;</p> <p>(d) To seek a joint member/officer meeting with the Minister for Housing and Planning, to pursue the amendment or deletion of the 2007 Direction;</p>		<p>and informs other corporate plans and strategies including the Biodiversity Strategy, the Climate Change Strategy, the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Strategy and the Council's approach to the reduction of its use of natural resources;</p> <p>Housing Strategy 2009-2013;</p>
<p>To help mitigate the impact of the current economic conditions on local people and businesses, through the development and implementation of appropriate initiatives;</p>	<p>(a) To retain car parking charges for 2010/11 at 2009/10 levels, including the provision of some free parking on Saturdays and in the run up to Christmas each year;</p> <p>(b) To continue to pay undisputed local supplier invoices within twenty days;</p> <p>(c) To better publicise the contracts or opportunities available for the supply of goods and services to the Council;</p> <p>(d) To continue with measures designed to assist those in housing need to cope with the impacts of the recession;</p>	<p>(a) The retention of car parking charges for 2010/11 at 2009/10 levels, including the provision of some free parking on Saturdays and in the run up to Christmas each year;</p> <p>(b) The achievement of the payment of 97% of invoices within twenty days, as measured by Local Performance Indicator 13, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(c) The expansion of the information available on the Council's website about forthcoming contacts, and to hold an event for local businesses to promote opportunities for the supply of goods and services to the Council, by 31 March 2011;</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 3 – Be an innovative and a top performing Council in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets;</p> <p>Aim 5 – Community Leadership and Advocacy;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p>



Key Objective	Action(s)	Target(s)/How Measured	Link to Medium-Term Aims, the Budget for 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents
	<p>(e) To continue to work towards the future development of key retail sites in the district, in particular the St. John's Road area of Epping;</p> <p>(f) To consult upon and agree a Development Brief for the St. John's Road area of Epping;</p> <p>(g) To introduce other measures introduced to lessen the impacts of the economic recession, which various panels of the Council, or the Local Strategic Partnership, have supported;</p>	<p>(d) The provision of at least two mortgage rescues, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(e) The completion of consultation in respect of the Development Brief for the St. John's Road area of Epping, and the agreement of the Development Brief by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(f) The reporting on a regular basis of the Council's achievements in mitigating the impact of the current economic conditions on local people and businesses;</p> <p>(g) The Local Strategic Partnership to review the nature and extent of the local impact of the economic recession through its Credit Crunch Task and Finish Group, and to assess the range of support services available to local communities and businesses, identify gaps and initiatives to respond, on an ongoing basis;</p>	<p><b>relevant corporate plans and strategies or assessment reports</b></p> <p>Housing Strategy 2009-2013;</p> <p>Homelessness Strategy 2009-2012;</p> <p>Specific budgetary provision has been made for the preparation of the Development Brief for the St. John's Road area of Epping;</p>
<p>(3) To further improve the Council's corporate procedures for safeguarding local children and young people as part of Essex County Council's Children's Trust arrangements;</p>	<p>(a) To ensure that all appropriate members and officers of the Council are appropriately trained and aware of safeguarding responsibilities;</p>	<p>(a) The introduction and completion of a programme of staff training in respect of safeguarding responsibilities, at levels relative to individual roles and responsibilities, by 31 March 2011;</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through</p>

Key Objective	Action(s)	Target(s)/How Measured	Link to Medium-Term Aims, the Budget for 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents
	<p>(b) To ensure that members and officers are confident in dealing with safeguarding concerns;</p> <p>(c) To continue to liaise with the West Essex Children's Trust Board via the Epping Forest Children's Partnership, and to review arrangements at a local level in line with Essex-wide developments;</p>	<p>(b) The introduction and completion of a programme of member training in respect of safeguarding responsibilities, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(c) The achievement of improved corporate 'buy-in' to Child Protection and Safeguarding arrangements, by 31 March 2011; (To be expanded to reflect achievable arrangements)</p> <p>(d) The improved dissemination of information in respect of corporate procedures for safeguarding local children and young people throughout directorates; (To be expanded to reflect achievable arrangements)</p> <p>(e) The implementation of an appropriate initiative promoting safeguarding arrangements via the display of posters and leaflets, by 31 March 2011;</p>	<p>partnership working and use of assets;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>Child Protection Policy and specific directorate arrangements;</p> <p>Housing Strategy 2009-2013;</p> <p>Homelessness Strategy 2009-2012;</p>
(4) To improve the performance of the Benefits Service;	<p>(a) To improve performance in respect of the processing of new benefit claims, as measured by National Indicator 181;</p> <p>(b) To improve performance in respect of the processing of changes of circumstance, as</p>	<p>(a) The processing of new benefit claims within an average of 25 days, as measured by National Indicator 181 for 2010/11, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(b) The processing of changes of circumstance within an average of</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex;</p>

Key Objective	Action(s)	Target(s)/How Measured	Link to Medium-Term Aims, the Budget for 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents
	<p>measured by National Indicator 180;</p> <p>(c) To implement the agreed key recommendations arising from the Benefits service inspection undertaken in January 2010;</p>	<p>8 days, as measured by National Indicator 180 for 2010/11, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(c) The agreement and implementation of the key recommendations arising from the Benefits service inspection, within timescales to be agreed with the Audit Commission;</p>	<p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>The budget for 2010/11 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy include additional funding for the Benefits Service, following the restructure agreed by the Cabinet in July 2009;</p>
<p>(5) To maintain the Council's sound financial position;</p>	<p>(a) To increase the Council Tax for 2010/11 by no more than 2.5%;</p> <p>(b) To ensure that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy delivers a balanced budget in its final year;</p> <p>(c) To ensure that the General Fund Reserve Balance falls to no lower than 25% of Net Budget Requirement;</p> <p>(d) To continue to achieve high levels of revenue collection, as measured by Local Performance Indicators 14 and 15;</p>	<p>(a) The level of the Council Tax increase for 2010/11;</p> <p>(b) The success of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in delivering a balanced budget for 2013/14;</p> <p>(c) The achievement of target performance for Local Performance Indicator 14 (Council Tax) and Local Performance Indicator 15 (National Non-Domestic Rates) for 2010/11 by 31 March 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to collect 97.8% of the Council Tax due for 2010/11;</li> <li>• to collect 98% of the National Non-Domestic Rates due for 2010/11;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>The Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee (25 January 2010) recommended a 1.5% increase in Council Tax for 2010/11. the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is based on a 1.5% increase for 2010/11 and increases of 2.5% for the subsequent three years, to deliver a balanced budget for 2013/14;</p>

<p>(6) To achieve the level of savings identified within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy;</p>	<p>(a) To develop savings projects and an overall strategy for the achievement of the level of savings identified within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy;</p> <p>(b) To achieve efficiency savings of £600,000 for 2011/12;</p> <p>(c) To assess and determine the longer term future of the leisure management contract, to include contract extension negotiations or arrangements for re-tendering the contract,</p> <p>(d) To identify the most appropriate and viable future method of delivering the Council's Arts Service, to ensure future delivery of the service across the district</p> <p>(e) To identify and develop mutually beneficial partnerships with external organisations; (Target/performance measure required)</p>	<p>(a) The consideration of progress on the identified savings projects and the overall strategy, by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee, by 30 June 2010;</p> <p>(b) The submission of reports to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee, on the progress of identified savings projects, on a regular basis;</p> <p>(c) The achievement of the savings target for 2011/12;</p> <p>(d) The completion of the assessment and determination of the future of the leisure management contract by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(e) The investigation of alternative methods of delivery of the Council's Arts Service, and the successful implementation of new or revised arrangements, by 31 March 2011;</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy includes net savings targets of £600,000 for 2011/12, £400,000 for 2012/13 and £200,000 for 2013/14. These are expressed as net savings as they can be achieved through either reducing costs or increasing income. If these savings targets are not achieved, it is unlikely that the Council will have a balanced budget by 2013/14;</p> <p>Place Survey 2008/09;</p> <p>CAA Organisational Assessment 2008/09;</p>
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<p>(7) To work with the Epping Forest Safer Communities Partnership to further reduce levels of actual crime and the fear of crime in the district;</p>	<p>(a) To achieve a reduction in levels of actual crime and the fear of crime in the district;</p> <p>(b) To achieve improved outcomes for National Indicator 17 (Perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour) and National Indicator 21 (Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council);</p>	<p>(a) The achievement of a reduction of in the level of overall crime of 2.5% for 2010/11 by 31 March 2011; <b>(NB. Target to be confirmed by the Safer Communities Partnership)</b></p> <p>(b) The achievement of an increased percentage <b>(Target to be identified by the Safer Communities Partnership)</b> of residents feeling confident about crime in the district, as measured by National Indicator 17 and National Indicator 21;</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 5 – Community Leadership and Advocacy;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>Place Survey 2008/09;</p> <p>CAA Organisational Assessment 2008/09;</p> <p>Safer Communities Partnership Strategic Assessment 2010/11</p>
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<p>(8) To seek continuous performance improvement and the best use of resources;</p>	<p>(a) To achieve an overall score of 3 (Performing Well) in the CAA Organisational Assessment for 2009/10 (to be undertaken in 2010/11);</p> <p>(b) To achieve overall improvement in respect of the Council's Key Performance Indicators for each of the four years from 2010/11 to 2013/14;</p> <p>(c) To continue to improve performance on the processing times of all categories of planning applications, as measured by National Indicator 157;</p> <p>(d) To further improve the Housing Repairs Service, primarily through the appointment of a private housing repairs management contractor, and to increase performance on repairs response times as measured by Local Performance Indicators 7, 8 and 9;</p> <p>(e) To retain current high overall satisfaction levels with the Repairs Service times, as measured by Local Performance Indicator 10;</p> <p>(f) To further improve street scene standards (litter, graffiti, detritus, fly-posting, fly-tipping) across the district, as measured by National Indicators 195 and 196;</p>	<p>(a) The achievement of an overall score of 3 (Performing Well) for the CAA Organisational Assessment for 2009/10;</p> <p>(b) The achievement of a percentage improvement rate of (% to be determined) in respect of the Council's Key Performance Indicators for 2010/11, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(c) The achievement of target performance (to be determined) for National Indicator 157 for 2010/11, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(d) The appointment of a private repairs management contractor by 1 January 2011;</p> <p>(e) The achievement of target response and satisfaction levels for Local Performance Indicators 7, 8, 9 and 10 for 2010/11, by 31 March 2011;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LPI 7 (Emergency Repairs) 99% within target time (24 hours);</li> <li>• LPI 8 (Urgent Repairs) 98% within target time (5 working days);</li> <li>• LPI 9 (Routine Repairs) 98% within target time (6 weeks);</li> <li>• LPI 10 (Satisfaction) (to be determined)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>The processing of planning applications is a statutory service, and is funded by the Continuing Service Budget;</p> <p>The Capital Programme contains an allocation of £1.337m for the Customer Services Transformation Programme;</p> <p>Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2010/11;</p> <p>Housing Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan 2010/11;</p> <p>CAA Organisational Assessment 2009/10;</p> <p>Place Survey 2008/09;</p>
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<p>(g) To fully embed the Council's Workforce Planning and Development arrangements within its business planning processes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased understanding of workforce planning within directorates through appropriate training; and</li> <li>• early identification at a strategic level, of staffing/training needs which to be reflected in the annual Learning and Development Plan;</li> </ul> <p>(h) To complete the prioritisation of the customer care improvements identified by the Customer Services Transformation Panel, and to develop an implementation programme of works;</p> <p>(i) To secure Level 2 ('Achieving') of the Equality Framework For Local Government, in respect of the Council's approach to securing equal life chances for all;</p>	<p>(f) The achievement of target performance (to be determined) for National Indicators 195 and 196 for 2010/11, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(g) The full incorporation of Workforce Planning and Development arrangements within Directorate Business Plans for 2010/11, by 31 May 2010;</p> <p>(h) The agreement of customer care priorities by 30 June 2010;</p> <p>(i) The agreement of funding and a programme of customer care improvement works, by 30 October 2010;</p> <p>(j) The implementation of agreed key recommendations arising from the informal Equality Peer Challenge to be undertaken in March 2010, by 31 March 2011;</p>	
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<p>(9) To enable the provision of additional affordable housing in the district, and other initiatives to assist people unable to purchase a property on the open market;</p>	<p>(a) To establish a Local Housing Company to purchase properties for let at market rents to nominees from the Council's Housing Register;</p> <p>(b) To ensure the purchase by the Local Housing Company of at least three properties during 2010/11;</p> <p>(c) To ensure the purchase by the Local Housing Company of the maximum number of properties to be agreed by the Council by the end of 2011/12;</p> <p>(d) <b>Subject to the agreement of the Cabinet (1 February 2010)</b>, to provide Home Ownership Grants to enable Council tenants to purchase an open market property, thereby releasing a Council property to be let to an applicant on the Council's Housing Register;</p> <p>(e) <b>Subject to the agreement of the Cabinet (1 February 2010)</b>, to provide Social Housing Grant to one of the Council's Preferred Registered Social Landlord Partners, to fund the purchase of 5/7 two and/or three bedroomed houses on the open market for let at affordable rents;</p>	<p>(a) The establishment of a Local Housing Company by 31 December 2010;</p> <p>(b) The purchase of at least three properties by the Local Housing Company, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(c) The purchase of the target number of properties by the Local Housing Company, 31 March 2012;</p> <p>(d) The provision of at least six Home Ownership Grants of £28,000, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(e) The provision of social housing grant of up to £375,000 to one of the Council's Preferred Registered Social Landlord Partners, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(f) The assessment of the residential development potential of difficult-to-let garage sites, by 31 March 2011;</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets;</p> <p>Aim 5 – Community Leadership and Advocacy;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>Housing Strategy 2009-2013;</p>
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	<p>(f) <b>Subject to the agreement of the Cabinet (1 February 2010)</b>, to assess the development potential of difficult-to-let garage sites with vacancies in excess of 20% (and no waiting list), and the number of additional homes that could be provided on each site;</p>		
<p>(10) To continue the improvement in the benefit the Council receives from its investment in information and communications technology;</p>	<p>(a) To complete the server virtualisation project, to achieve energy cost savings and the enhancement of business continuity and resilience arrangements;</p> <p>(b) To increase the use of the corporate document management system in order to improve administrative processes;</p> <p>(c) To rationalise and consolidate relevant property databases in order to improve administrative processes;</p> <p>(d) To implement appropriate on-line payment facilities for Council services; <b>(Target/performance measure required)</b></p> <p>(e) To implement appropriate mobile working arrangements to achieve efficiencies; <b>(Target/performance measure required)</b></p>	<p>(a) The completion of the transfer from existing to virtual servers by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(b) The implementation of the of the corporate document management system within Local Land Charges and Housing by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(c) The achievement of reduction in the number of property databases by 31 March 2011;</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>The Capital Programme includes an allocation of £454,000 in 2010/11 for ICT projects. The reduction in electricity consumption achieved through virtualisation supports the Council’s Climate Change Strategy objective of reducing the Council’s carbon footprint;</p>

<p>(11) To continue to increase the Council's recycling performance;</p>	<p>(a) To improve performance in respect of the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting, as measured by National Indicator 192;</p> <p>(b) To complete the assessment and provision of recycling facilities, so that all flats and similar communal buildings, where owner/manager consent for introduction exists, can benefit from appropriate recycling facilities;</p>	<p>(a) The achievement of target performance of 58% for National Indicator 192 for 2010/11, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(b) The completion of the assessment and implementation of recycling facilities at flats and similar communal buildings, by 31 March 2011;</p> <p>(c) The achievement of an improvement in public satisfaction with the Council's waste and recycling services, by 31 March 2011;</p>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services;</p> <p>Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 5 – Community Leadership and Advocacy;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>Recycling Credit income of £118,000 is included within the budget for 1010/11;</p> <p>CAA Organisational Assessment 2009/10;</p> <p>Place Survey 2008/09;</p>
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<p>(12) To review the Council's commercial landholdings in order to coordinate competing land use proposals, to fulfil the authority's operational requirements and achieve value for money.</p>	<p>(a) To agree a timetable and programme for the relocation or termination of current uses of the Council's depot site at Langston Road, Loughton, with a view to better utilising the asset either through development (in partnership or otherwise) or sale;</p>	<p>(a) <b>Subject to the agreement of the Cabinet (1 February 2010)</b> to the principle of relocating the Council's services from Langston Road to a new site in Oakwood Hill, and the relocation of the Council's Museum Store to its vacant unit at the Brooker Road Industrial Estate in Waltham Abbey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the development of a cost benefit analysis and budgetary cost for the construction of new depot facilities at Oakwood Hill, and the agreement of capital financing by 31 March 2011;</li> <li>• the design, tendering and construction of a new depot facility at Oakwood Hill by 31 March 2011;</li> <li>• the relocation of identified services to the Oakwood Hill site by 31 March 2011;</li> <li>• the agreement of the future depot location of the Council's waste management contractor, in conjunction with the letting of a new waste management contract in either 2012 or 2014;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium-Term Aims</b></p> <p>Aim 4 - Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets;</p> <p><b>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents</b></p> <p>CAA Organisational Assessment 2008/09;</p> <p>Asset Management Plan 2007 – 2012;</p> <p>Capital Strategy (2020 – 2013);</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2010 to 2014;</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the issue of Notice to Quit to the WRVS in respect of their current occupation of the Langston Road site, in accordance with lease terms, by 31 March 2011;</li></ul> <p>(b) The development of a strategy for the development or sale of the Langston Road site when vacant, by 31 March 2011.</p>	
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## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee:** Finance and Performance **Date:** 25 January 2010  
Management Cabinet Committee

**Place:** Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, **Time:** 6.00 - 7.15 pm  
High Street, Epping

**Members Present:** C Whitbread (Chairman), R Bassett, Mrs D Collins, Mrs M Sartin, D Stallan and Ms S Stavrou

**Other Councillors:** D Jacobs, B Rolfe and J M Whitehouse

**Apologies:**

**Officers Present:** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), R Palmer (Director of Finance and ICT), P Maddock (Assistant Director (Accountancy)), B Moldon (Principal Accountant), E Higgins (Insurance & Risk Officer), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

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### **33. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman 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.

### **34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

### **35. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2009 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **36. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration by the Cabinet Committee.

### **37. COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT 2009/10 - ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced a report regarding the results of the Council's Organisational Assessment for 2009/10, as part of Comprehensive Area Assessment

(CAA) which was the new framework for the independent assessment of local public services in England.

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that the Council had been assessed as performing adequately (score = 2 out of 4) in the following five different categories:

- (i) Managing Performance;
- (ii) Use of Resources;
- (iii) Managing Finances;
- (iv) Governing the Business; and
- (v) Managing Resources.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that a number of strengths and weaknesses had been identified by the assessment. Some of the problems highlighted by the report included the Council's rate of improvement being slower than other councils, performance within the Benefits Section, the provision of affordable housing being affected by the limited availability of suitable sites, and the need for the Council to focus on value for money and the quality of its service delivery. However, some services were improving, particularly in relation to the Council's top priorities. Nearly all of the Council's housing stock had met the Decent Homes standard, and Recycling rates had improved and should improve further following recent changes to the service. The District Council Tax was the second lowest in Essex, and the Council had developed its workforce and improved its succession planning. The Council had been exploring different ways to deliver its services and improve its partnership working; the Leader of the Council had taken a proactive role in key partnerships, including chairing the Local Strategic Partnership.

The Cabinet Committee was reminded that a report had been submitted for consideration at next week's Cabinet meeting regarding the further refinement of the Key Priority Objectives and the review of the Council Plan for the next four-year period.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance Management stated that the report had been a snapshot of the problems facing the Council at that particular time. It was acknowledged that there had been problems with the Benefits Section due to the implementation of a new computer system. It was felt important that a balance should be maintained between what was important for residents and what was important for the Audit Commission. The number of the Council's key priority objectives had been reduced from 27 to a more manageable 5, and would be linked to the new Council Plan and the Directorate Business Plans. Approximately a third of the key priority objectives were finance orientated, whilst others were concerned with issues such as the local environment. The full list of objectives was currently being finalised and would be reported to next week's Cabinet on a supplementary agenda.

In respect of the problems highlighted within the Benefits section, the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development stated that a report restructuring the section had been agreed by the Cabinet in July 2009, whereby additional funding had been made available for extra resources and a previously temporary post had been added to the permanent establishment. The Director of Finance & ICT added that the report from the current inspection of the Benefits section being undertaken by the Audit Commission should be available by May 2010.

**RESOLVED:**

That the results of the Council's Organisational Assessment for 2009/10 be noted.

**38. RISK MANAGEMENT - UPDATED CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Senior Finance Officer (Risk & Insurance) presented a report regarding the update of the Corporate Risk Register. The Cabinet Committee was informed that the Register had been considered by both the Risk Management Group and the Corporate Governance Group, who felt that the scores for three existing risks should be increased to reflect their increased vulnerability.

The Senior Finance Officer stated that risk 9, Depot Accommodation, had been the first risk reviewed. In view of the concern regarding possible overcrowding at the Langston Road Depot site, it was felt that the score for this risk should be increased from E2 (very low likelihood, critical impact) to B2 (high likelihood, critical impact). The second risk reviewed had been risk 17, Capital Receipts spent on non revenue generating Assets. As 'Meeting Housing Need' was now the top priority for capital spending, it was felt that the score for this risk should be increased from D2 (low likelihood, critical impact) to C2 (significant likelihood, critical impact). Finally, risk 18, Loss or Theft of Data, had been reviewed due to the recent erroneous publication of a confidential agenda item on the Council's website. This risk had previously been scored as D2 (low likelihood, critical impact) but it was felt that it should now be scored as C2 (significant likelihood, critical impact).

The Director of Finance & ICT explained that both the Risk Management Group and Corporate Governance Group had concerns about capital grants being given to Housing Associations, especially as the Council's capital reserves were expected to drop to approximately £10million over the next five years. For clarification, the Director added that it was not the intention of the Council to sell the depot at Langston Road before acquiring replacement facilities, and neither were the Council expecting Sita to go into receivership, although there had been problems with some of the other Council contracts, such as Pest Control.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the likelihood for the risk relating to Depot Accommodation be increased from E (very low likelihood) to B (high likelihood);
- (2) That the likelihood for the risk relating to Capital Receipts spent on non revenue generating Assets be increased from D (low likelihood) to C (significant likelihood);
- (3) That the likelihood for the risk relating to Loss or Theft of Data be increased from D (low likelihood) to C (significant);
- (4) That the current tolerance line on the risk matrix be considered satisfactory and not be amended; and
- (5) That, incorporating the above agreed changes, the amended Corporate Risk Register be approved.

**Reasons for Decision:**

It was essential that the Corporate Risk Register was regularly reviewed and kept

relevant to the threats faced by the Council.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To score the risks differently or to consider alternative actions if necessary.

**39. RISK MANAGEMENT - CORPORATE DOCUMENTS**

The Senior Finance Officer (Risk & Insurance) presented a report concerning the corporate Risk Management documents.

The Senior Finance Officer stated that the Risk Management Strategy and Risk Management Policy Statement were reviewed on an annual basis by the Cabinet Committee and then recommended to Cabinet for adoption. No significant amendments to the documents had been proposed at the current time, only minor amendments to reflect changes in the Council's Constitution. The updated Terms of Reference for the Officer Risk Management Group were for the Cabinet Committee to note.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the updated Risk Management Strategy be adopted; and
- (2) That the updated Risk Management Policy Statement be adopted; and

**RESOLVED:**

- (3) That the updated Terms of Reference for the Risk Management Group be noted.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The annual review of the corporate Risk Management documents ensured that the Risk Management process remained relevant and current.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To request more substantial amendments to any or all of the documents.

**40. COUNCIL BUDGET 2010/11**

The Director of Finance & ICT presented a report detailing the proposed Council Budget for 2010/11, which enabled the Council's policy on the level of reserves to be maintained throughout the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, despite the proposed use of £0.5 million from the reserves. The budget was based upon the assumptions that Council Tax would increase by 2.5% and housing rents would increase by 2.4%.

The Director of Finance & ICT emphasised the likely reduction in the Council's Revenue Support Grant when the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was undertaken after the next General Election. The revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had assumed a 5% decrease in 2011/12 with the total decrease being 10% over the CSR period. It was proposed to increase the target for the 2010/11 Continuing Services Budget (CSB) to £18.1million. The largest growth item was an additional £92,000 for the increase in employer's contributions to the pension fund. A number of CSB income streams had been affected by the downturn in the



Housing Market, including Local Land Charges, Building Control and Development Control. However, other income streams had exceeded expectations, including MOT income from Fleet Operations, and Licensing income.

The Director of Finance & ICT advised that negotiations for the 2010/11 pay award had currently reached an impasse after the Employers had offered 0% in response to the Unions' request for 2.5%. The Cabinet Committee were reminded that every 1% increase added £200,000 to the Council's salary bill. The MTFs had assumed annual increases of 1.5%, and it was expected that the final award would be close to this. The use of capital receipts on non-revenue generating assets had been highlighted when the Cabinet Committee had considered the updated Risk Register. The Capital Programme anticipated the balance of capital receipts reducing from £24.3million to £9.9million over the next four years. The next triennial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) was due in March 2010. Applications for the capitalisation of pension deficit payments in the sums of £1.205million for the General Fund and £565,000 for the HRA had been submitted to the Department of Communities & Local Government for 2009/10; these directions would not be confirmed until late January.

In respect of the District Development Fund (DDF), the Director of Finance & ICT reported that the largest items of expenditure were £508,000 for the reduction in investment income, £400,000 for the generation of the Local Development Framework, £147,000 for the Planned Building Maintenance Programme, and £137,000 for the likely reduction in special grant for Concessionary Fares as discussed at the previous Cabinet meeting. Officers were also working with an international firm of Accountants on a "no win, no fee" basis to establish whether the Council could recover any Value Added Tax. The current DDF programme of £1.358million exceeded the guideline by £58,000. However, as the DDF was perennially underspent, this was not considered significant.

The Director of Finance & ICT advised the Cabinet Committee that within the revised MTFs, two alternative models had been presented for consideration. The first model envisaged a 2.5% increase in the District Council Tax in line with the previously agreed budget guidelines. The second model envisaged a 1.5% increase in the District Council Tax for 2010/11, which was predicted to lead to a £360,000 greater reduction in Revenue Balances over the next four years. Current projections indicated that the Council's reserves would be £6.7million by 2013/14; 25% of net budget requirement would £4.3million and thus it was not envisaged that this particular budget guideline would be breached.

For the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Director of Finance & ICT explained that the balance was expected to be £6.09million at 31 March 2011, following an anticipated deficit of £7,000 in 2010/11. There were no significant variances within the proposed HRA budget for 2010/11. Finally, the report of the Chief Financial Officer was highlighted to the Cabinet Committee, and had concluded that:

- (i) the estimates presented were sufficiently robust for the purposes of the Council's overall budget for 2010/11; and
- (ii) the reserves of the Council were adequate to cope with the financial risks facing the Council in 2010/11, but that savings would be required in subsequent years to bring the budget back into balance in the medium term.

The Principal Accountant then presented the report on the Council's Prudential Indicators for 2010/11 to 2012/13, and the Treasury Management strategy for 2010/11. The main changes had been the plan to increase the Members' awareness

of Treasury matters through increased training, a new mid-year progress report, and the likely scrutiny of the Council's Treasury function by the Audit & Governance Committee.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development thanked the Officers for their efforts in putting the budget together. The Portfolio Holder proposed that the model for a 1.5% increase in Council Tax should be adopted, with a 2.5% increase in future years. This would be a prudent measure given the current economic circumstances, and the possibility that the Council's settlement could decrease by more than the assumed 10% within the MTFs. The Cabinet Committee agreed this measure, which would see the District Council Tax for a Band 'D' property rise to £148.77.

In response to questions from the Members present, The Director of Finance & ICT stated that there would be too many uncertainties if the model was rolled beyond 2013/14. Savings from the Essex Procurement Hub had been reflected through the estimates quoted for items such as Cash Collection, Insurance and Network Maintenance. A report had been considered by the Cabinet Committee at its previous meeting, which had illustrated the savings obtained by the Council from its membership. The last triennial valuation of the Pension Scheme had increased the employer's contributions by 1% annually; since then employee contributions had also been increased, and further reforms were being considered. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the budget for Standards Committee investigations had been exceeded and an extra allocation of £5,000 had been made within the DDF for 2010/11. It was confirmed that the majority of the investigations involved Town or Parish Councils.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That, in respect of the Council's General Fund Budgets for 2010/11, the following be adopted:
  - (a) the revised revenue estimates for 2009/10, and the anticipated reduction in the General Fund balance of £837,000;
  - (b) an increase in the target for the 2010/11 CSB budget from £18m to £18.1m (including growth items);
  - (c) an increase in the target for the 2010/11 DDF net spend from £1.3m to £1.4m;
  - (d) an increase of 1.5% in the District Council Tax for a Band 'D' property to raise the charge from £146.61 to £148.77;
  - (e) the estimated reduction in General Fund balances in 2010/11 of £497,000;
  - (f) the four year capital programme 2010/11 – 2013/14;
  - (g) the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2010/11 – 2013/14; and
  - (h) the Council's policy on General Fund Revenue Balances to remain that they be allowed to fall no lower than 25% of the Net Budget Requirement;
- (2) That, including the revised revenue estimates for 2009/10, the 2010/11 HRA budget be agreed;

(3) That the application of the rent increases and decreases proposed for 2010/11, in accordance with the Government's rent reforms and the Council's approved rent strategy, with the addition of an extra element to give an average overall increase of 2.4% be noted;

(4) That the established policy of capitalising deficiency payments to the pension fund be maintained, in accordance with the Capitalisation Direction request made to the Department for Communities and Local Government;

(5) That the Council's Prudential Indicators be agreed;

(6) That the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11 be agreed; and

(7) That the Chief Financial Officer's report to the Council on the robustness of the estimates for the purposes of the Council's 2010/11 budgets and the adequacy of the reserves be noted.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To assist Cabinet in determining the budget that would be recommended to the Council for agreement on 16 February 2010.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To not approve the recommended figures and instead specify which growth items to be removed from the lists, or request that further items be added.

**CHAIRMAN**

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