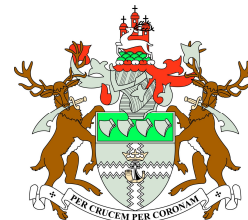


Supplementary Council Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Council Tuesday, 2nd November, 2010

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

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

To receive reports from the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility:

- (a) Report of the Leader;
- (b) Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) Report of Environment Portfolio Holder;
- (d) Report of Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder;
- (e) Report of Housing Portfolio Holder;
- (f) Report of Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder;
- (g) Report of Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder;
- (h) Report of Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder;
- (i) Report of Performance Management Portfolio Holder;
- (j) Report of the Safer and Greener Portfolio Holder.

9. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE (Pages 9 - 10)

To answer the attached questions to Portfolio Holders 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.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 2 November 2010

Subject: Environment Portfolio Holder Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mary Sartin

Recommending: That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted

Defra Bid

I am pleased to report that officers have been successful in a further bid to Defra for funding to enable the investigation of contaminated land. The most recent success relates St Paul's Field at Sedge Green, Nazeing. In the early 1990s this land spontaneously combusted, fuelled by ground gas, and smouldered for a number of months. It is believed that the site contains a mix of domestic and industrial wastes. It had originally been intended that the Environment Agency would undertake the investigation, but they were unable to do so. The Agency suggested that we should put a bid to Defra for funding, and we have received £61,000. The work has to have been carried out by March 2011 to secure the money.

We will also be receiving Defra funding of £8,750 in support of local air quality monitoring. It is hoped to use this funding to provide on-line access to air quality monitoring results.

Fly Tipping

Members will have been aware of press coverage on fly tipping over recent weeks. Officers are working hard to counteract this problem. Since January all incidents of fly tipping, where there has been the likelihood of obtaining evidence of the source of the waste, have been passed to Environment and Neighbourhood Officers. In these cases officers have investigated as far as possible, including taking statements from any members of the public who may have witnessed incidents.

There have been four successful prosecutions since January which have resulted in fines and costs being awarded to the Council and there are a number of other cases pending.

Unfortunately, a large amount of material dumped is not witnessed and consists mainly of green waste from which no evidence can be gathered. A new data sharing protocol is about to be started involving Councils in the eastern region along with, among others, trading standards, police and HMRC. It is hoped that data involving criminal activities will assist us in investigations into fly tipping and waste transfer enforcement.

Working with Essex Police, our officers have been carrying out spot checks on waste carrier vehicles to deter and detect those who may be intent on carrying out fly tipping within the District and a further series of checks are planned for the coming months.

Fly tipping is a criminal activity which has an affect on all our lives and it is one which we have certain resources which can help prevent it. That said, it is an area where all residents can help reduce the problem by being alert and passing on information when they see this crime being committed. Landowners can also help reduce the problem by ensuring that they make their property as difficult to access as possible and by clearing up any fly tips as quickly as possible.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 2 November 2010

Subject: Legal and Estates Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor L Wagland

Item: 6(f)

Recommending:

That the report of the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder be noted

Information and Communications Technology

It has been three months since my last update to Council on ICT matters and I hope Members will find the following paragraphs useful in bringing them up to speed with some of the projects currently being worked on.

The previous government introduced a Government Connect Secure Extranet (GCSX), which was initially used primarily for transferring confidential data between local authorities and the Department for Work and Pensions. A new requirement has now been enforced that emails to all government, health and police mailboxes sent from local authorities are required to come from a GCSX mailbox. This has involved a lot of work making additional mailboxes available to staff and providing the necessary training before they are allowed access to the secure system. So if you receive an email from someone with an address of asmith@eppingforestdc.gcsx.gov.uk instead of the usual asmith@eppingforestdc.gov.uk it is no cause for alarm and at the moment there is no requirement for Members to be on the GCSX system.

Most of the training for GCSX is delivered via e-learning at each user's own workstation and many online training modules have been developed in conjunction with Human Resources. ICT staff also put on a programme of direct training for staff on various applications. The ICT Training Room has recently been refurbished and Members are invited to liaise directly with ICT staff if they would like to see this area and examples of the training provided.

Green ICT is often mentioned in the media and a number of initiatives are being pursued to help reduce the Council's carbon footprint. One example of this was an after hours check on equipment that had not been switched off. The results of this check provided a useful reminder to staff but to improve overall control automated power down software is currently being evaluated.

I previously mentioned the 'virtualisation' project, which involves replacing old servers with newer faster ones that are much smaller and require far less power and air conditioning. This project is progressing well with 81 of the 87 servers now fully upgraded. The entire project is likely to be completed by the end of December.

The rollout of the corporate Electronic Records Document Management System is continuing. This has been used as the basis for both an internal and a public facing freedom of information system, with the internal system now being live. The basic

system is now operational in the Housing Directorate and full system is anticipated to be in place before the end of November. Other potential users identified include the museum photo archive and the Legal Service.

Estates and Valuation

Anderson Strategic Marketing have been appointed to undertake consultation on the Langston Road proposed retail park development. I have asked officers to work up a detailed programme to ensure that all interested parties are able to contribute having seen plans of the proposals; including highways works. The approach envisages that expert consultants who are part of the project team will be available to explain what is intended. This consultation process will take place prior to the submission of the planning application and is in addition to any statutory consultation required by the planning process. I will be able to share further detail following scheduled meetings on 28th October and 3rd November.

One of the key elements of the planning application is the proposed highways works to Chigwell Lane and our consultants JMP are having final meetings with Essex CC Highways to ensure that the detailed modelling being carried out is agreed. The current works to the Langston Road/Chigwell Lane junction are being undertaken by Essex CC and are not part of retail park proposal.

Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners have been appointed as consultants to prepare a report on the retail impact of the scheme which will be based upon research undertaken by Roger Tym Associates for the six retail centres in the District. The architects PRC are preparing elevational drawings and more detailed designs and all consultants in the project team are working to provide all of the information required for the planning application which has now been clearly identified.

In particular I have asked the officers to incorporate in so far as possible, the suggestions made by the Portfolio holder for Safer and Greener, in relation to environmentally conscious building design and materials.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 2 November 2010
Subject: Operational Planning & Transport Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Syd Stavrou **Item:** 6(h)

Recommending:

That the report of the Operational Planning & Transport Portfolio Holder be noted.

Operational Planning

Determination of planning applications within specified periods

I thought members might appreciate an update on how we are performing against National Indicator targets after the second quarter of this year. For NI 157A, major category planning applications within 13 week turnaround time, we have achieved a performance of 92.86% against a target of 81%. For NI 157B, minor category planning applications within 8 week turnaround time, we have managed to improve on our previous quarter's performance achieving 83.33% against a target of 80%. We are still slightly behind on NI 157C, "other" category planning applications within 8 weeks, but overall a total of 630 out of 681 applications have been decided in time. Our figures are 92.51% against a target of 94%, but this category includes householder applications and comprises the highest in terms of number of applications received.

Appeals against planning application refusals which have been allowed

Against a year-end target of 28% we have achieved, at the end of the 2nd quarter, a credible performance of 28.1%. Out of 32 appeals for the first 2 quarters only 9 have been allowed. Committee reversals, where Members overturn officer recommendations, account for 5 of the 9 allowed. It should be noted that committee reversals will continue to affect this percentage figure and should be borne in mind when judging our performance against this particular target.

Transport and Highways

Epping, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton Parking Reviews

On Monday 25th October, Cabinet agreed to recommence the above parking reviews. A verbal update will be given at Full Council.

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Questions by Members under Notice

(a) Vere Road and Burton Road Car Parks, Loughton

By Councillor C Pond to Councillor S-A Stavrou, Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder

“How much was received by the Council from parking charges at the Vere Road and Burton Road Car Parks, Loughton, in each financial year from 2007-08 to date?”

(b) External Consultants and Agency Staff

By Councillor J M Whitehouse to Councillor C Whitbread, Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

“How much did the Council spend on external consultants and agency staff in:

- (a) 2007/08
- (b) 2008/09
- (c) 2009/10?”

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