

# **EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES**

**Committee:** Council **Date:** 19 September 2019

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.55 pm

**Members Present:** Councillors R Bassett (Chairman), H Kane (Vice-Chairman), N Avey, R Baldwin, A Beales, N Bedford, P Bolton, H Brady, R Brookes, L Burrows, D Dorrell, S Heather, R Jennings, S Jones, S Kane, H Kauffman, P Keska, J Knapman, Y Knight, J Leppert, C McCredie, M McEwen, J Mclvor, L Mead, A Mitchell, G Mohindra, R Morgan, S Murray, S Neville, M Owen, A Patel, J Philip, D Plummer, C P Pond, C C Pond, S Rackham, C Roberts, D Roberts, B Rolfe, B Sandler, J Share-Bernia, P Stalker, S Stavrou, D Stocker, D Sunger, B Vaz, C Whitbread, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley

**Apologies:** Councillors G Chambers, I Hadley, J Jennings, J Lea, A Lion and M Sartin

**Officers Present:** G Blakemore (Chief Executive), T Carne (Corporate Communications Manager), N Dawe (Interim Strategic Director & Chief Financial Officer), R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer), P Seager (Chairman's Officer) and S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)

## **30. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Democratic Services Manager 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.

## **31. FORMER COUNCILLORS F. LIMER, P. PENNELL & S. PERRY**

The Chairman informed members that former Councillors F. Limer, P. Pennell and S. Perry had recently passed away.

Freddy Limer had represented the Epping and the Epping Hemnall Ward of the District, as a Conservative Councillor from 1974 to 1986. He became the Vice Chairman in 1982/83 and Chairman of Council in 1983/84. He had also served on many of the Council's committees, working groups and outside bodies during this time.

Philip Pennell had represented the Waltham Abbey West Ward of the District from 1990 to 2002. He had served on many of the Council's committees, working groups and outside bodies during this time.

Sue Perry had represented the Epping Hemnall Ward of the District from 2004 to 2007. She had served on many of the Council's committees, working groups and outside bodies during this time.

Members paid tribute to the memory of the former District Councillors and stood for a minute's silence in their memory.

## **32. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 30 July 2019 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor M Owen declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 (Motions – Climate Emergency) by virtue of the mentioning of Aranco Oil Co in the debate and his employer concluding business with the company. Councillor M Owen stated he would abstain from voting on this item.

**34. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(a) The Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that he had attended a memorial service at St Andrew's, North Weald with the 56 Squadron in remembrance of the Battle of Britain.

The Chairman asked members to support a charity event he would be holding in aid of Essex Young Carers, which would be held on 28 October 2019 at Papillon, Chigwell.

Furthermore, he would also be hosting another a business networking event on 28 November 2019, which would bring together local businesses.

(b) Flowers

The Chairman announced the he intended to send the flowers from the meeting to Parsonage Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton.

**35. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

The Council noted that there were no public questions under notice that had been submitted for consideration at this meeting.

**36. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE**

The Council noted that there were no members questions under notice that had been submitted for consideration at this meeting.

**37. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER & MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**

The Council received written reports from Portfolio Holders. The Chairman invited the Leader of Council to provide an oral report and the opportunity for other members of the Cabinet to give updates on matters concerning their relevant portfolios.

(a) The Leader of the Council

Councillor C Whitbread reported that the Cabinet had recently agreed the Asset Strategy, which would enable the Council to pursue development opportunities within the District, increase the Council's revenue stream and to identify potential housing development sites.

Furthermore, the Government had granted special permission for a new lease of land at North Weald Airfield, to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. It would be for HGV parking and associated facilities for the operation of checking documentation of companies importing and exporting high value goods. Notification would be sent to 1400 residents and contact details would be made available. The Council had negotiated £50,000 for North Weald Parish Council and the same amount would be given to the Local Highways Panel for schemes in the District. Other funding would also be put into the master planning and green space.

In addition, progress continued with the St John's Road, Epping development and a report would be coming forward to the Cabinet meeting on 5 December 2019, along with the land transfer development.

He had also met with Princess Alexander Hospital and the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), to engage in the significant changes proposed across health and social care in Essex and were working closely with the Sustainability and Transformational Partnership (STP).

Finally, the Essex Leaders and Chief Executive meeting discussed many issues facing the county, which included ideas around bringing empty properties back into use and preparations for Brexit.

(b) Planning Services Portfolio Holder

Councillor Philip advised that the Council had been successful in a Government funding bid for £50,000, to tackle illegal development in the green belt.

(c) Business Support Services Portfolio Holder

Councillor Stavrou advised that the Valuation Office had determined in favour of the company wishing to reduce their business rate exposure, which amounted to over £1.1 million. A provision had been set aside for such cases and other authorities and the Government were due to take a share of the loss, later in the financial year.

(d) Housing and Property Services Portfolio Holder

Councillor H Whitbread advised that members were welcome to attend the opening ceremony of the new affordable flats in Burton Road on 8 November 2019.

Furthermore the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Local Government and Homelessness) Luke Hall MP visited the District to look at the homeless pods in North Weald and Norway House.

(e) Community and Partnership Services Portfolio Holder

Councillor Bedford updated members on issues concerning stolen and cloned number plates and the successful actions of the Community Police.

### **38. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE**

(a) Local Plan

Councillor Mohindra asked the Planning Services Portfolio Holder to give an update on the Local Plan.

Councillor Philip advised that the interim letter from the Planning Inspector had been received. The majority of the comments were positive and there had been no indications that the Council had failed in its duty to co-operate or had been found legally unsound. There were a number of things which the Council would need to take on board and do work with, and the Council intention was to write back to advise of these actions once an agreed schedule had been agreed.

The Inspector had identified actions required to update the Habitats Regulation Assessment modelling and the impact on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. This required further work and it had been unfortunate that Natural England had made no indication that they were unhappy with the Council's methodology until the deadline for the statements to support the hearing sessions for the examination of the Local Plan. Furthermore, there had been changes arising from recent court cases and updates to DEFRA guidance which would need to be taken on board. Therefore in combination with other changes required for sites at Limes Farm, Jessel Green, the convent in Chigwell, a site in Roydon, South Epping and the phasing of development of Harlow East, it had been envisaged that it may take some time to complete and he would continue to report on progress through the Local Plan Cabinet Committee.

(b) Natural England Implications

Councillor Knapman asked the Planning Services Portfolio Holder when the Council would know about the air quality mitigation strategy for new dwellings in the District, as it was having a detrimental financial effect on small development businesses because of planning applications being granted but not issued.

Councillor Philip advised that he recognised the issues it had been causing local developers and the council had been working towards addressing these problems and looking at ways to grant the smaller developments and fulfil Natural England's requirements. Although, since some of the material planning considerations had changed in between the granting of planning applications, both delegated and committee decisions would need to be relooked at before the applications were issued. If anything changed in-between now and the next Council meeting, he would advise members.

(c) Parking Issues on Cascade Road, Buckhurst Hill

Councillor Neville asked the Contract and Technical Services Portfolio Holder whether a solution had been found for the parking on grass verges at Cascade Road, Buckhurst Hill.

Councillor N Avey advised that he agreed with the Ward Councillor, that yellow lines in this area would not be the right answer and he would consult with officers about other solutions, previous discussed. He would also conduct a site visit.

(d) Traffic Infrastructure Considerations

Councillor Avey asked the Planning Services Portfolio Holder whether he could give assurances to residents about traffic infrastructure issues in relation to sites set out in the Local Plan; and in particular the Water Lane site in Roydon.

Councillor Philip advised that this area came under both the Local Plan and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. There had been significant work carried out and one of the visions for the Garden Town was for a corridor of sustainable transport. Its aim were to reduce of reliance on private vehicles by 60% with the infrastructure

requirements being considered in relation to the cost of the developments, which would further reduce the burden on the surrounding infrastructure. In addition, infrastructure was also being considered separately in Epping Forest, Harlow and East Herts Local Plans.

(e) New Affordable Housing at Davis Court

Councillor Murray asked the Housing and Property Portfolio Holder, whether the family of the Former Councillor Joan Davis had been invited to the opening ceremony of the Council Housing at Burton Road, named in her honour.

Councillor H Whitbread advised that the family had been invited and were attending.

(f) Homelessness Conference

Councillor Bolton asked the Housing and Property Portfolio Holder for further information on the RESI (Residential Sector) Convention she had attended in relation to the Council's approach to homelessness; and whether she had any feedback from users of the homelessness pods in North Weald.

Councillor H Whitbread advised that she had been approached by RESI to sit on the 'trail blazers' panel, where many ideas and solutions had been put forward to deal with homelessness issues across the country.

She advised that all but one of the pods were being used and users were finding the facilities acceptable. The pods were preferable to bed and breakfast accommodation as it allowed independent living.

(g) Waltham Abbey Recycling Centre

Councillor Dorrell asked the Contract and Technical Services Portfolio Holder whether he would join him and other members to make representations to Essex County Council in regards to reversing or relaxing both the reduction in opening hours and the strict controls on the permitted waste at Waltham Abbey recycle centre.

Councillor Avey stated that fly tipping was reaching epidemic levels across the District. He advised that it was strange that Essex County Council could not see the correlation between the introduction of restrictions and the increase in fly tipping and that it was counter intuitive. He thanked Biffa for the work they were doing in order to collect the fly tipping.

(h) Accommodation Strategy

Councillor J M Whitehouse asked the Leader for an update on the feasibility of the land to the rear of the Civic Offices and the possibility of the new building at North Weald, in relation to the informal Call-In at the start of the year.

Councillor C Whitbread advised that a report would be coming forward to Cabinet on 31 October 2019, which would give members further information.

(i) St John's Road Development

Councillor Burrows asked the Leader whether he could give a more detailed update on the St John's Road, Epping development.

The Leader advised that the Council was making progress in consultation with other partners and the Cabinet were considering options. The consultants report would be considered shortly, and a report would be brought to the Cabinet on 5 December 2019.

(j) Permits for the Waste Recycling Centres

Councillor Plummer asked the Contract and Technical Services Portfolio Holder whether the Council would pursue Essex County Council for permits to allow small vans and trailers to deposit residential renovation waste at Waltham Abbey recycling centre.

Councillor Avey advised that he would pursue this idea with Essex County Council, as it would prevent the issue of fly tipping in the District.

(k) Anti- Idling

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked the Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder whether an environmental officer could be sent to Bury Road, Epping as residents were experiencing car idling at school drop off and collection times; How the educational clean air campaign was progressing; and whether he agreed that there was a discrepancy between Fixed Penalty Notices for air pollution and other Fixed Penalty Notices for litter and parking?

Councillor Patel advised that officers followed the legislation when issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for air pollution, which involved an officer being present, observing, giving a warning and then to issue the Fixed Penalty Notices to offender.

Regarding the promotion of anti-idling, the Public Health Team had five banners available that could be placed around the District and members were welcome to suggest areas. The Council would also raise the issue with schools in the District.

(l) Overcrowding on Central Line

Councillor C C Pond asked the Planning Services Portfolio Holder whether the Council would meet with Transport for London regarding the over crowding issues experienced by residents on the Central Line.

Councillor Philip advised that the Council had discussed the over crowding issues with Transport for London on the Central Line. Furthermore Transport for London had attended an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Council would continue dialog with Transport for London in the future.

## 39. MOTIONS

(a) Climate Emergency

**Moved by Councillor S. Neville and seconded by Councillor J. Philip**

“That the Council notes that:

- i. humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO2 levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350-ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;

- ii. in order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO<sub>2</sub>eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible;
- iii. individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm;
- iv. carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;
- v. Epping Forest District Council has already shown foresight when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Breakdown, having signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, written an Environment Sustainability Policy and Action Plan, and have worked to use renewable energy and energy efficiency and have had a Green Working Party driving the agenda for some years;
- vi. unfortunately, our current plans and actions are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050;
- vii. the IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, published in the autumn of 2018, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise, and told us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities;
- viii. councils and Parliaments around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency;

That the Council believes that:

- ix. all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Epping Forest District and the UK that local authorities commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;
- x. the consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority;
- xi. bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide); and

That the Council resolves to:

- xii. declare a 'Climate Emergency';
- xiii. pledge to do everything within the Council's power to make Epping Forest District Council area carbon neutral by 2030;
- xiv. call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;

- xv. work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C;
- xvi. continue to work with partners across the district and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
- xvii. in the special circumstances of this district, resolves to protect the Special Area of Conservation through the Local Plan and every other means; and
- xviii. implement an Air Quality Strategy and bring forward sustainability guidance on planning.”

**Amendment moved by Councillor H. Whitbread and seconded by Councillor S. Neville**

“ That the Council engage with young people when considering the issue of climate change and appoint a ‘Youth Ambassador’ from the Epping Forest Youth Council.”

**Carried**

**Motion as amended ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council notes that:

- (i) humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350-ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;
- (ii) in order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO<sub>2</sub>eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible;
- (iii) individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm;
- (iv) carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;
- (v) Epping Forest District Council has already shown foresight when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Breakdown, having signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, written an Environment Sustainability Policy and Action Plan, and have worked to use renewable energy and energy efficiency and have had a Green Working Party driving the agenda for some years;
- (vi) unfortunately, our current plans and actions are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C limit before 2050;

- (vii) the IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, published in the autumn of 2018, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise, and told us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities;
- (viii) councils and Parliaments around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency;

That the Council believes that:

- (ix) all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Epping Forest District and the UK that local authorities commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;
- (x) the consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority;
- (xi) bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide); and

That the Council resolves to:

- (xii) declare a 'Climate Emergency';
- (xiii) pledge to do everything within the Council's power to make Epping Forest District Council area carbon neutral by 2030;
- (xiv) call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;
- (xv) work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C;
- (xvi) continue to work with partners across the district and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
- (xvii) in the special circumstances of this district, resolves to protect the Special Area of Conservation through the Local Plan and every other means;
- (xviii) implement an Air Quality Strategy and bring forward sustainability guidance on planning; and
- (xix) engage with young people when considering the issue of climate change and appoint a 'Youth Ambassador' from the Epping Forest Youth Council."

**40. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - PROPERTY ACQUISITION STRATEGY****Mover: Councillor A Patel, Commercial and Regulatory Portfolio Holder**

Councillor A Patel submitted a report regarding a supplementary capital loan of up to £30 million for the purpose of general investment opportunities that were subject to the criteria outlined in the Asset Management Strategy (approved by Cabinet on 13 June 2019).

Councillor S Murray requested the right for his individual vote to be recorded. Namely that he voted against the recommendation.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

That a supplementary capital loan of £30 million for the purpose of general investment opportunities be approved.

**41. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS (LEADER APPOINTMENTS)****Mover: Councillor C Whitbread (the Leader)**

Councillor C Whitbread reported revised Leader Appointments in relation to the Council's representation on outside organisations.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the following Leader appointments be made for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year;

- (a) Health and Wellbeing Board – Councillor A. Patel, Councillor N. Bedford;
- (b) Economic Board – Councillor A. Patel; and
- (c) Tourism Board – Councillor R. Bassett.

**42. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBER TO THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE****Mover: Councillor J Knapman, Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee**

Councillor J Knapman reported that one of the two co-opted members of the Audit and Governance Committee had served their second three year term of office, and if they wished to serve any further it would subject to a competitive selection process.

Mr T. Jarvis had indicated that he wished to serve for a further three years. Therefore in accordance with the procedures to recruit a Co-Opted Member set out in Article 11 of the Council's Constitution for Audit and Governance Committee, a Panel of four Councillors needed to be appointed.

The second co-opted member on the Audit and Governance Committee indicated that due to other commitments, she could not guarantee her availability for the interview panel. Therefore, she would be appointed as an advisory, non voting member of the interview panel.

Report as first moved: **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That a Panel of four Councillors be appointed, including the Chairman of Audit & Governance, with delegated authority to undertake the interviews following public advertisement and to appoint the preferred candidate for the vacant Co-Opted Member position on the Audit & Governance Committee;
- (2) That pro rata rules not be applied to the Panel;
- (3) That the following 4 Councillors be appointed to the Interview and Selection Panel:
  - (a) Councillor J Knapman – Conservative group;
  - (b) Councillor R Jennings – Loughton Residents Association group;
  - (c) Councillor S Heap – Green Party group; and
  - (d) Councillor J M Whitehouse - Liberal Democrats group; and
- (4) That Ms. N Nanayakkara, the other co-opted member on the Audit & Governance Committee, be invited to attend the interviews in an advisory, non-voting capacity.

**43. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor B Jennings advised that the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 3 September 2019 had been cancelled due to the unavailability of an external organisation and that none of the select committees had met since the last meeting.

Councillor S Murray advised that he was concerned with the cancellation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and hoped that this would not occur again.

**44. CALL- IN AND URGENCY - PROPOSED LETTING OF LAND AT NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD TO HER MAJESTY'S REVENUE AND CUSTOMS**

The Council noted that the Vice-Chairman of the Council (in absence of the Chairman) had agreed that the following decision be treated as a matter of urgency and not subject to call in:

**(a) Proposed Letting of Land at North Weald Airfield to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs**

- (1) The Cabinet agreed to the approval of a new lease of land at North Weald Airfield to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs for HGV parking and associated facilities to allow the operation of the checking of documentation for companies importing and exporting high value goods.
- (2) Alongside the more formal agreement concerning the use of the Airfield, the Cabinet agreed to seek other benefits from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and

Local Government in terms of infrastructure, planning, information exchange and other legacy benefits.

**45. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS & EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- (a) Epping Forest Local Liaison Group

Councillor B Jennings asked that a report be brought forward by members appointed to the Epping Forest Local Liaison Group.

- (b) Health and Wellbeing Board

Councillor C Whitbread advised that he would bring an update on the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board, to a future meeting.

**CHAIRMAN**