

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee:** Council **Date:** Thursday, 24 February 2022

**Place:** Council Chamber - Civic Offices **Time:** 7.00 - 9.32 pm

**Members Present:** H Kane (Chairman), J Share-Bernia (Vice-Chairman), R Balcombe, R Bassett, N Bedford, P Bhanot, R Brookes, L Burrows, D Dorrell, I Hadley, S Heap, S Heather, R Jennings, J Jennings, J Jogia, S Jones, S Kane, P Keska, J Lea, A Lion, T Matthews, C McCredie, J McIvor, R Morgan, S Murray, S Neville, C Nweke, M Owen, A Patel, J Philip, S Rackham, C Roberts, B Rolfe, M Sartin, D Stocker, D Sunger, B Vaz, C Whitbread, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and K Williamson

**Members Present (Virtually):** R Baldwin, H Kauffman, L Mead, Caroline Pond, C C Pond, K Rizvi, P Stalker and D Wixley

**Apologies:** N Avey, D Barlow, P Bolton, H Brady, A Mitchell and D Plummer

**Officers Present:** G Blakemore (Chief Executive), A Small (Strategic Director Corporate and 151 Officer), C Hartgrove (Interim Chief Financial Officer), G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and P Seager (Chairman's Officer)

**Officers Present (Virtually):** A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

### **60. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Democratic and Electoral 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.

### **61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- (a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor R Basset declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 17 due to being a non-executive director of Qualis.
- (b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor S Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 by virtue of knowing Stephen Lye, Chairman of the Members' Remuneration Panel.

### **62. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 December 2021 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**63. ANNOUNCEMENTS****Chairman's Announcements****(a) Civic Awards**

The Chairman announced that this year's Civic Awards would be held in the Conference Suite at the Civic Offices on the 19 March 2022. This would be a great trial of using the Conference Suite on such a scale and if all goes well then many more events could be held there.

Unfortunately, only 100 people can be accommodated for, I know many will be disappointed but I have had to limit the number of attendees on this occasion. Hopefully next year everyone can attend and enjoy the award ceremony.

**(b) Flowers**

The Chairman announced that she intended that the flowers from this evening's meeting to go to the reception area in the Civic Offices to be enjoyed by all of the staff and visitors.

**(c) Russian invasion of the Ukraine**

It was with great sadness that I hear this morning of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, my thoughts and prayers and I hope I speak for everyone here tonight, are with the people of the Ukraine in these very dark hours.

**64. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)****Draft Budget Reports and supporting Appendix with reference to Epping High Street****Question by G Foy to Councillor J Philip, Finance, Qualis Client and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

To consider if it was appropriate for the proposed request for another £100k to support the digging up of the recently laid Yellow Tarmac, costing £84k, and replacing it to make it a permanent change should be justified based on just 37 positive responses out of 58 responses received back to the survey in August 2021, at a time when social distancing was still a worry for many and that it would be 15 Bays that have been lost and not 9 as stated in the report.

**Response given by Councillor J Philip, Finance, Qualis Client and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

The surface will only be replaced when it had reached the end of its life as it was a temporary surface. The £100k has been identified for a permanent replacement of the surface as and when it becomes necessary, the temporary surface was not anticipated to need replacing with a permanent surface for another 24 months hence the £100k in the 5 year forward plan and not for this year.

The consultation received 58 responses in total.

- 64% Positive
- 10% Neutral
- 26% Negative

The consultation consisted of;

- Social Media Communications;
- Dedicated page on the Council website;
- Hand delivered letter to all of the High Street businesses inviting them to comment;
- Email to Epping Town Council to cascade to Town Councillors and Epping Market Stall Holders; and
- Email to Ward Councillors.

The results show a clear majority in favour of retaining the scheme and it should be noted that usually in consultations such as this it was the people who were not happy that tend to respond.

### **Supplementary question by G Foy to Councillor J Philip, Finance, Qualis Client and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

It was easier to state 64% but to be clear it was less than 50% of the people sitting in this room, it was only 37 people that responded to say they wanted it to be permanent. I have asked questions of officers, who wont respond, would you be happy for the Council to spend another £100k and take away 15 parking spaces. I have spoken to many of the independent traders and retailers and none of them are happy with this proposal so its no good saying 64% when the numbers really were 37 out of 8,000 people who live in Epping and the surrounding area. This consultation took place a year ago when people were concerned with social distancing. Mr Foy asked the Councillors that were here tonight to consider whether or not there should be another consultation survey as a result of the pandemic now being over.

### **Response given by Councillor J Philip, Finance, Qualis Client and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Philip stated that he was distressed to hear what Mr Foy was saying, he was clearly listening to places that are not reflecting the proper value of the Hight Street. Many of the businesses have been spoken to and are in favour of this scheme and I believe Mr Foy was putting far too much emphasis on what a few people post on social media and on the Everything Epping Forest website, which was certainly not a reliable place of opinion.

It was to replace a temporary surface, it was something that was well welcomed, if Mr Foy wants to go sown into numbers and talk about 37 in favour we then have to look at the 26% of those that were against it, so there were many fewer people against doing the replacement work than there were in favour. However, it was not simply down to looking at the results of a survey, one of the things we were elected to do was to represent our district. I have spoken to my fellow members from Epping Forest, I have spoken to people who actually live and work on the High Street and the vast majority of them are in favour of replacing this temporary surface with a permanent surface, therefore this was clearly something that the Council need to do. There was a temporary surface there and the Council would have to pay to replace it with a permanent surface or remove it. Given that the overwhelming impression was positive that was why it was in the budget as an item. When it came forward to the monies actually being spent decisions would be made in the normal way to spend that money.

## **65. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE**

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

**66. 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) Leader of Council**

Councillor C Whitbread advised that he had been busy with a number of meetings in recent weeks with the Leaders of Harlow and Uttlesford to discuss the outcomes of the new Government White Paper on Levelling Up that was published at the beginning of February and to look at areas that EFDC may wish to work together in the future.

He advised he had also had meeting with all of the Essex Leaders last Monday and we continue to speak on a regular basis to partners across the district and county where we were looking to move forward on a range of issues as the year progresses and when the next meeting takes place he advised that he would have more information to pass on to members.

**(b) Customer and Partnerships Portfolio Holder**

Councillor S Kane stated that he would like to publicly state his thanks to the ICT Team and the Finance Business Team who have concluded a year-long project to get a stable and supportive environment into the corporate finance systems so that the Council can advance on putting some of the enhancements that have been on hold, until this had been completed.

He asked Members' to pass onto residents and businesses in their wards that there were still available some business support grants and although we have now come out of the covid restrictions there were a number of businesses who had suffered and could use these grants, he therefore urged people to apply for a grant where applicable. They were open to micro and small businesses and applications could be made up until the 4 March 2022.

**(c) Community and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder**

Councillor A Patel advised that in May 2022 the district would play host to Ride London which was the world's greatest festival of cycling. Saturday 28 May 2022 was stage 1 which was the Women's World tour Ride London Classic. The world's top female athletes will take part with a peloton of twenty teams of six riders.

On Sunday 29 May 2022 Ride London Essex 100 will see twenty five thousand riders take part in a 100 mile challenge ride starting in central London and passing through Essex and returning to finish line on Tower Bridge in central London.

The event organiser was London Marathon Events and EFDC would be working closely with the organisers to ensure the district was able to capitalise on the phenomenal opportunities an event of this magnitude could bring. Ride London was a huge charitable event which raised large sums of money for good causes. In its first seven editions this event raised approximately £80 million for charities. Ride London would be broadcast live on TV and was a wonderful opportunity for EFDC to showcase the Epping Forest District.

Third sector organisations in the district which inspire activity will be eligible for funding from the London Marathon Charitable Trust. During the events time in Surrey from 2013 to 2019 almost £5 million was granted to a wide range of organisations and local communities which would not have had access to this level of funding.

EFDC had a comprehensive activation plan in place with activity ahead of the weekend itself including an expanded cycling for health programme across the district providing Bikeability sessions for local children and family bike rides. Working closely with schools, sharing an education toolkit around physical activity and supporting school children to design flags and banners for the event, holding bunting competitions for the finish line. Through Places for Leisure cycling themed competitions and challenges would take place.

EFDC have reached out to Epping and Ongar Town Councils and will be working closely with them to organise wonderful fan zones. Over the weekend itself there will be stalls, music, arts and crafts, bunting and activities on offer to create a real buzz and to encourage community groups to come along and have a presence over the weekend. The aim for this event was to be bigger and better than the Tour de France.

The promotion of sustainable transport was an important part of the Councils initiative to reduce carbon emissions in the battle against climate change and RideLondon tied in with this brilliantly. Ultimately the publicity will help to boost our local high street economies before the positives that it will bring in terms of jobs and investment.

**(d) Finance, Qualis Management and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor J Philp advised that he would like to follow on with what Councillor Patel was saying around RideLondon, as Members may be aware it was made public last Friday in terms of the route and all of the road closures, which are available to see on the website, if you go to [Ridelondon.co.uk](http://Ridelondon.co.uk) you will be able to find all the details of the road closures. Some roads will be closed most of the day and some will be rolling closures. EFDC have had little notice to maximise the upside this year in terms of what we are doing from an economic development point of view, but the Economic Development team were working with the businesses in the district. They have put RideLondon in contact with the Epping Ongar Railway and the first meeting had already taken place. So actually working with the various businesses in the district to maximise the change for that. When the Tour de France came through the district a lot of publicity through TV coverage and it was worth noting that the finish on Saturday 28 May will be in Epping and will be on National TV. It was a great opportunity for businesses to boost their profiles of what was going on in the district.

It was recognised that there would be impacts to businesses and RideLondon have been very clear that they will help to work with those businesses to minimise impact and so as we go through next year's RideLondon we will have much more warning around what we are doing so we can maximise those economic development benefits more significantly.

This was something we should be welcoming, it was a great opportunity for the district, a great opportunity for businesses and to make sure we get the most out of it.

## Questions

Councillor S Heap stated his question was to the Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder, regarding his report and referred to page 55 of the agenda:

### **“4 Development Management**

#### **Planning Applications**

2. Having to regularly explain the process to applicant’s agents, despite clear and consistent messaging from the Project Officer and updating on releasing decisions on the Council website; “

Councillor Heap stated that he could not believe that this was a regular occurrence and would take up a huge amount of time if it was published clearly on the Councils website.

Councillor N Bedford stated that he wasn’t quite sure what point Councillor Heap was trying to make but reading through what was written in the report Officers were having problems with applicant’s agents and were constantly having to explain the process to them. Once an application was submitted there was a time line on that application and the agents were constantly phoning the officers to get updates on such application therefore causing delays on applications as officers have to spend time explaining to the agents where they can find the updated information on the website.

There will be a new process in place at the end of May 2022 which will enable the Planning team to update the data into a programme so that agents and applicants can look at that programme themselves without having to contact officers which will help to streamline the process. Another problem being that applicants nominate an agent to deal with their application and yet they also contact officers for information but because they have nominated an agent the officer could not therefore discuss the application with the applicant, it had to go through the agent.

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

The Chairman thanked Members for giving notification of their intention to ask a question without notice. She informed members that as this was budget meeting she would like to give emphasis to the budget and therefore would allow only 20 minutes for questions.

### **(a) Improving the district’s infrastructure**

Councillor S Murray advised that his question was to the Leader of Council, Councillor C Whitbread. He stated that he had visited every residence in his ward in the last 10 days and that his question was to the feedback he had received.

What steps could the Leader undertake in the very near future to improve three very poor parts of the district’s infrastructure that were currently badly affecting many local residents:

- The poor state of the pavements making them difficult for many pedestrians to use, particularly the elderly;
- The expensive and infrequent bus service within and between the towns and villages in the district; and

- The almost non-existent provision for cyclists in terms of safer cycling routes and dedicated secure storage facilities in our town centres.

Councillor C Whitbread stated that two of the three statements were County Council issues and with regard to the state of the pavements across the whole County there were different issues with pavements and pot holes. He advised that these issues were reported on a regular basis by himself and other County Councillors, some of which were at the Council meeting. There was over 5,100 miles of roads and pavements across Essex and they have to be properly inspected on a regular basis. The Leader advised that there was a County Councillor that covered Councillor Murray's ward and he should be discussing this issue with him and getting him to put forward reports.

With regards to safer cycling routes this could also be put forward to the County Council but would take a long time as there were limited funds.

Since the pandemic there had been a fall in the usage of buses as there were in many types of public transport and these were just starting to recover. There was the Bus Back Better consultation being carried out at present.

The Leader stated that he was happy to talk to Councillor Murray offline in more detail about the issues he had raised.

(b) Street Lighting in Loughton

Councillor B Jennings advised that his question was to the Leader of Council, Councillor C Whitbread and asked if Councillor Whitbread was aware of the street lighting in Loughton was not working. Since before Christmas last year the street lights in Loughton High Road have been going out one by one and there were now only 18 of the 42 lights that were still working. The lights, which were installed in 2003, are apparently obsolete and cannot be easily replaced by modern LED's. In an article date 7 December 2021 County Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, which included street lighting, was reported as saying that replacing these luminaires was a priority but three months on nothing has happened. Last week Councillor Scott was asked for an update, which had been acknowledged but has yet to be answered. Meanwhile if the lights continue to fail the High Road will become darker and darker which was completely unacceptable and the consequences of this lack of action are threefold:

- The impact on road safety, it was becoming extremely difficult for drives to see other road users including cyclists, the ever growing army of moped delivery drivers, drivers getting in and out of their parked vehicles and pedestrians trying to cross the roads. If there were to be an accident the lack of street lighting could be a contributory factor to and insurance company;
- The impact on personal safety, having to walk through the High Road in the dark was worrying for many especially for women on their own; and
- The impact on the night time economy, a gloomy looking High Road does not help the still struggling businesses including the High Roads bars, pubs, gyms restaurants and takeaways to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

The worst affected area and darkest part of the High Road was currently Centric Parade, which was owned by the Council, therefore what can Epping Forest District Council do to help resolve the matter.

Councillor C Whitbread advised that this was the first time he had heard of this particular problem with the street lighting in Loughton High Road. He stated that he would personally take this issue to the County Member, Councillor L Scott and report back.

(c) Trees fallen across roads

Councillor R Brookes stated that her question was to Councillor N Avey who was absent and therefore asked the Leader of Council, Councillor C Whitbread if he would either be able to answer or take it back to Councillor Avey for an answer to follow.

She asked if the Leader was able to clarify the position about who was responsible for dealing with the trees that had fallen across so many roads recently. Essex County Council stated contractor to EFDC and some of the residents in her ward have had some confusing messages.

Councillor C Whitbread stated that last week during the storms over 1,000 trees fell in Essex and Highways did a brilliant job, along with some of the EFDC teams and numerous other people in clearing some of the debris and issues that came from the fallen trees. He advised that he would be happy to take this back to Councillor Avey and asked Councillor Brookes if she could provide him with more details and then it could be established if it was private land and the owners could be contacted. There shouldn't be any trees on the roads now as they had all been removed but there were still some over footpaths.

He added that members should pay tribute to all the people involved in clearing the trees and the debris and thank them for all of their efforts.

(d) Bonus Schemes paid to Qualis Members

Councillor S Heap advised his question was for the Finance and Qualis Client and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Councillor J Philip and asked how many Members at Qualis were on bonus schemes and what would be the expected total expected this year if targets were met.

Councillor J Philip advised that the bonus scheme had not been approved so there were no people on a bonus scheme, there was funding identified within the Qualis business case to which he didn't have any details with him. He stated that there would be a bonus scheme when Qualis started delivering against their business plans and making significant profits. It was not unreasonable for a private company to have a bonus scheme and the key point there was to make sure that any bonus scheme was in place was not simply for those at the top of the pyramid but would affect all of the employees within that group.

(e) Front gardens and vegetation being paved over

Councillor J H Whitehouse advised that her question was to the Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder, Councillor N Bedford. She stated that the Council were planting hundreds of trees but at the same time, residents were taking up their front gardens and vegetation and fully paving the space. She advised that at an earlier Council meeting she did raise this issue with Councillor Bedford and asked if the Council would consider raising an awareness campaign and wondered if that was progressing at all as she hadn't seen anything about it. Would the Council be able to provide a leaflet for residents explaining the importance of this whereby the tree



wardens and local members could post through letterboxes when works were seen to be beginning in a front garden in time for the resident to think again about having some tree planting.

Councillor Bedford advised that this was more for the Parish and Town Councils. He did discuss this with officers and had two simple answers:

- To consider the awareness campaign - everybody should be aware of the need for trees at present and if people were that way inclined they would go out and buy them. There was a policy in place to cover the amount of driveway that could be covered and people were being encouraged to keep part of the driveway clear for vegetation; and
  - Leaflets – there would be no paper leaflets produced as the Council were moving away from printing and supplying leaflets.
- (f) Sustainable electric bus service between Debden Station and the Epping Forest Shopping Park

Councillor Chris Pond advised that his question was also for Councillor Avey and he would therefore direct it to the Leader. He advised that an electric bus was promised as a sustainable bus service between Debden Station and the Epping Forest Shopping Park and asked when this was going to be provided.

Councillor C Whitbread advised that he would speak to Councillor Avey and get back to Councillor Pond with an answer.

## 68. MOTIONS

The Chairman reported that there were no motions to be considered at the meeting.

## 69. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME - ANNUAL REVIEW 2022/23

The Chairman of the Remuneration Panel, Mr S Lye presented a report following the annual review of the Epping Forest District Members' Allowances Scheme, which set out the Panels conclusions and recommendations with regard to the application of members' allowances for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

### **RESOLVED:**

#### **Basic Allowance**

(1) That, for the 2022/23 municipal year, no change be made to the level of Basic Allowance of £4,300 per member per annum, currently included in the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme;

(2) That for 2023/24 and future municipal years, the Council be encouraged to increase the Basic Allowance to bring the Council up to the level of the Basic Allowance paid by other Councils;

Special Responsibility Allowance

(3) That for the 2022/23 municipal year, no changes be made to the level of the Special Responsibility Allowances currently included in the Members' Allowances Scheme;

(4) That for the 2022/23 municipal year, the implementation level of Special Responsibility Allowance applied to the responsibilities identified in the Members' Allowances Scheme be unchanged

#### Revised Scheme and Guidance

(5) That, subject to the above recommendations and other matters set out in this report, the Members' Allowances Scheme and Guidance for 2022/23, attached at Appendix 2 to this report, be adopted and implemented with effect from 26 May 2022; and

(6) That the Panel continue to be kept apprised of the Council's intentions regarding any future restructure or governance review proposals arising from the electoral review of the Council being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England that directly affect the application of Special Responsibility Allowance for the specific member roles and responsibilities currently reflected in the Members' Allowances Scheme.

## 70. COUNCIL BUDGET 2022/23

### **Mover: Councillor J Philip, Finance, Qualis Client and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor J Philip presented a report of the Budget for 2022/23 (including Medium-Term Financial Plan, Capital Programme and Fees and Charges). He thanked Mr A Small, Strategic Director and S151 Officer and Mr C Hartgrove, Interim Chief Financial Officer for an excellent budget and for their sound financial advice. He also thanked members of the Audit and Governance Committee.

There voted for the recommendations (40) namely: Councillors R Balcombe, R Bassett, N Bedford, P Bhanot, R Brookes, L Burrows, D Dorrell, I Hadley, S Heap, S Heather, B Jennings, J Jennings, J Jogia, S Jones, H Kane, S Kane, P Keska, J Lea, A Lion, T Matthews, C McCredie, J Mclvor, R Morgan, S Murray, S Neville, C Nweke, M Owen, A Patel, J Philip, S Rackham, B Rolfe, M Sartin, J Share-Bernia, D Stocker, D Sunger, B Vaz, C Whitbread, H Whitbread, and K Williamson.

There voted against the recommendations (2) namely: Councillors J H Whitehouse and J M Whitehouse.

Abstentions (0).

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the draft General Fund Revenue and Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2022/23 as presented in *Attachment 1a*, be approved (pages 91-112 of the agenda).
- (2) That the draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital programmes for 2022/23 to 2026/27 presented in *Attachment 1b*, be approved (pages 113-124 of the agenda).

- (3) That the proposed Fees and Charges for 2022/23, including an average rent increase of 4.1% on Council Dwellings, presented in *Attachment 1c*, be approved (pages 125-141 of the agenda).
- (4) That the updated General Fund Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27 presented in *Attachment 1d*, be approved (pages 143-150 of the agenda).
- (5) That the Section 151 Officer's report – in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 – on the robustness of the estimates for the purposes of the Council's 2022/23 budgets and the adequacy of the reserves, presented in *Attachment 2*, be noted (pages 151-156 of the agenda).
- (6) That the Section 151 Officer's recommendation to maintain a minimum £4.0 million contingency balance in the Council's General Fund Reserve in the medium-term, including a contribution to the Reserve as part of the General Fund revenue budget proposals for 2022/23, be approved.
- (7) That the Treasury Management Outturn report 2020/21 considered by the Audit & Governance Committee on 22nd November 2021, presented in *Attachment 3*, be noted (pages 157-173 of the agenda).
- (8) That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Update report 2021/22 considered by the Audit & Governance Committee on 22nd November 2021, presented in *Attachment 4*, be noted (pages 175-186 of the agenda).
- (9) That the draft Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 considered by the Audit & Governance Committee on 17th January 2022 and recommended for Council approval, presented in *Attachments 5a*, be approved (pages 191-205 of the agenda).
- (10) That the draft Capital Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27, considered by the Audit & Governance Committee on 17th January 2022, presented in *Attachment 6*, be approved (pages 207-229 of the agenda); and
- (11) That the Constitution Working Group be asked to consider whether the Audit & Governance Committee's terms of reference should be formally expanded to incorporate responsibility for considering, and recommending for approval, the Council's Capital Strategy.

## **71. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022/23**

**Mover: Councillor S Kane, Customer and Partnerships Portfolio Holder**

Councillor S Kane submitted a report regarding the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23, which remained unchanged from 2021/22.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23 be approved.

**72. COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2022/23****Mover: Councillor J Philip, Finance Qualis Client and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor J Philip presented a report regarding the Council Tax Setting 2022/23. He advised that a supplementary agenda had been published due to a slight discrepancy in the precepts for Theydon Garnon Parish, therefore Appendix B and Appendix C referred to in the main agenda on pages 239 and 240 should be replaced with those published in the supplementary agenda.

He advised that the Cabinet had recommended a District Council Tax increase based on Band D properties of £5.00 a year which equated to less than 2 pence a day. The report also included the Town and Parish precepts and the Essex precepts for the Essex County Council, Essex Police and Crime Commissioner and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note that under delegated authority, the Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer, had calculated the Council Tax Base for 2022/23 for the whole Council area as 54,865.3 (Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended) and for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as set out in Appendix A (attached to the agenda).
- (2) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2022/23 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:
  - (a) £111,981,897 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils;
  - (b) £99,455,621 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;
  - (c) £12,526,276 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);
  - (d) £228.31 being the amount at 2(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (the amount at (1) above, the tax base), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
  - (e) £3,887,186 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;
  - (f) £157.46 being the amount at 2(c) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2 (e) above by Item T (1) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;

- (g) That it be noted that Essex County Council, Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and Essex Fire & Rescue Service have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the category of dwellings in the Council's area;
- (h) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts in Appendix C as the amounts of Council Tax for 2022/23 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings; and
- (i) That in accordance with section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council determines that the amount of Council Tax shown at 2 (f) of £157.46 for 2022/23, representing an increase of £5.00 compared to 2021/22 was not excessive and therefore there was no requirement to hold a local referendum.

### **73. LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL SIZE AND WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW**

**Mover: Councillor C Whitbread, Leader of the Council.**

Councillor C Whitbread advised that this was the first time in 22 years since a full Boundary Review of the Epping Forest District had taken place. He stated that the next stage of the review was starting to progress and Members would have to decide on the number that they would like to put forward. He stated that all groups had worked well together to get to this juncture and thought that the number suggested was probably too high as the Boundary Commission were looking for us to reduce our numbers maybe more than we are suggesting. Members decided at the previous Full Council that they wanted to continue with the approach that was currently in place for elections at this Council and in an ideal world there needed to be 3 seat wards to meet the requirements but we can make arguments in cases where it would not geographically work.

He reiterated that Members had elected to go for a small reduction from 58 down to 54, which was divisible by 3. When we come to the next stage and start looking at the ward maps we need to take into account growth and changes in areas over time.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the draft submission on a future Council Size of 54 Members, attached to the agenda at Appendix A, be agreed for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of the ongoing review of the Council's size and ward boundaries.

### **74. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23**

**Mover: Councillor D Sunger, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder**

Councillor D Sunger presented a report regarding the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, which was required by Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 and set out details of the Council's current practices and policies. This specifically included the Council's approach to its highest and lowest paid employees.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 attached as an appendix to these minutes, be adopted.

**75. QUALIS QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT Q4 2020/21 AND Q1 2021/22**

**Mover: Councillor J Philip, Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor J Philip introduced the Qualis Quarterly Monitoring Report for Q4 2020/21 and the Quarterly Monitoring Report for Q1 2021/22.

He advised that the Governance framework for Qualis, as agreed by Cabinet in February 2020, included the requirement that Qualis should report to Epping Forest District Council on its performance Quarterly.

The report presented the fourth Quarter's monitoring report for the Qualis trading year 2020/21 and covered the period from 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021. The Quarter 1 position covered 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 was also provided as part of this reporting.

Cabinet received the same report at their meeting on 7 February 2022 and the report was debated in great detail.

Councillor J Philip stated that there were two monitoring reports and the headlines were that they are primarily in line with the expectations of Qualis. Planning permission had now been granted for the five sites in Epping which had allowed the expenses to move from the profit and loss account into work in progress. He highlighted that there were some recommendations from the Qualis Auditors at the end of the auditing of their last years accounts and those recommendations were being implemented. He advised that he met with the Managing Director of Qualis on a weekly basis and made sure that proper rigour was applied.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That the Qualis Quarterly Monitoring Report - Q4 2019/20 (Outturn) be agreed.

**76. CALENDAR OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2022/23**

**Mover: Councillor S Kane, Customer and Partnerships Portfolio Holder**

Councillor S Kane submitted a report regarding the Calendar of Council meetings for 2022/23. He asked Members to agree to one alteration in that Annual Council be moved from Tuesday 23 May 2023 to Thursday 25 May 2023.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to Annual Council being moved from Tuesday 23 May 2023 to Thursday 25 May 2023, the draft Calendar of Council Meetings for 2022/23, as attached, be adopted.

**77. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Council received a written report from Councillor M Sartin, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which was noted.

**78. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS & EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

The Chairman directed Members to the second Council supplementary agenda and the business contained therein.

**(a) Grange Farm Trust Vacancy**

Councillor C Whitbread stated that the report noted the retirement of Parish Councillor B Scrutton from the Grange Farm Trust and he would like to nominate Chigwell Parish Councillor Rashni Holden as his replacement. Normally appointments would be made at Annual Council but the Grange Farm Trust had requested this appointment sooner so that they could carry on with their work.

**RESOLVED:**

That Parish Councillor Rashni Holden be appointed to the vacant position representing Epping Forest District Council as a Managing Trustee for the Grange Farm Trust.

**(b) The Royal Gunpowder Mills**

The Chairman advised that her report was as and hoped Members found it an interesting read.

**(c) Requests for Updates**

Councillor Janet Whitehouse requested a report from the Partnership Governor of the Princess Alexander Hospital to be brought to the next meeting. She thanked the Chairman for regularly bringing a report on the Royal Gunpowder Mills to Council.

She also requested that any Members who had not brought a report forward this municipal year would do at the next meeting. If they were representing the Council on bodies then Members really ought to know what was happening.

Councillor S Murray requested a report from Councillor R Bassett, as the Councils representative on the Epping Forest Campus of the new college and to report on two items:

- (i) What the final capital receipt was that the college authorities have received for the whole of the site of the former Epping Forest High School or Lucton Boys/Girls School before that; and
- (ii) How that capital receipt had been spent and how much was spent on the Epping Forest Campus and didn't make its way to Hackney, Redbridge, Havering or London.

Councillor Bassett asked if Councillor Murray could send him an email detailing his queries and he would take it up with the Principle at a meeting they had in the morning.

**CHAIRMAN**



## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23**

#### **Introduction**

Epping Forest District Council is located adjacent to three outer London boroughs and on the Central Line into the City of London. Residents have easy access to major motorway routes as both the M11 and M25 run through the district. There is a high incidence of commuting from the district which impacts on the local labour market and levels of pay, particularly for jobs that require skills that are in relatively short supply.

There are some long standing recruitment difficulties and retention issues in key skill areas and the Council is making every effort to manage skill shortages with apprenticeships, including higher level apprenticeships, introducing a new recruitment strategy and streamlined processes, working with Public Practice to encourage planners, designers working in the private sector to work in the public sector.

The situation is not static and is capable of changing very rapidly, but the Council continually considers steps regarding pay and allowances that are designed to assist with recruitment and retention.

This Statement reflects the Council's current pay, pension and leave policies and strategies which will be amended over time to deal with changing circumstances. These documents play an important role in attracting and retaining the best people to the Council.

All decisions on pay and reward for Chief Officers will comply with the Council's current Pay Policy Statement.

#### **Legislation**

Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh Councils to produce a Pay Policy Statement for 2012/2013 and for each financial year thereafter.

The Council's Pay Policy Statement;

- Must be approved formally by the Council;
- Must be approved each year;
- May be amended during the course of the financial year; and
- Must be published on the Council's website.

The Pay Policy Statement must include;

- The level and elements of remuneration for each of the Chief Officers;
- The remuneration of its lowest paid employees (together with its definition of 'lowest paid employees' and the Council's reasons for adopting that definition);
- The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and other Officers; and
- Other aspects of Chief Officers' remuneration; remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments and transparency.

Remuneration is defined widely, to include not just pay but also charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increases/enhancements of pension entitlements and termination payments.

All salaries and calculations are based on full time equivalent (fte).

## **Publication of the Pay Policy Statement**

The Policy has been made available on the Council's website.

## **Effect of this Policy Statement**

Nothing in this Policy Statement enables unilateral changes to employee's terms and conditions. Changes to terms and conditions of employment must follow consultation and negotiation with individuals and recognised trade unions as set out in other agreements and in line with legislation. At the time of approving of this Statement by full Council, a consultation process to change pay and allowances arrangements is ongoing.

## **Pay Arrangements**

During 2018/19 negotiations took place with the recognised trade unions to move pay away from National Conditions to local arrangements.

The outcome of these negotiations resulted in a Collective Agreement and local pay arrangements were implemented with effect from 1 October 2019. The local pay scales can be found at Appendix 1 (pay is at 1 April 2020). At this point, Inner Fringe London Allowance was incorporated into salary scales, and no longer forms part of separate pay bargaining.

Grades no longer contain incremental points, and employees are paid at a spot salary within the grade range. Incremental progression, therefore, no longer applies but progression within grade can be applied in accordance with pay policy. Placement within the respective Grade Zones is also in accordance with pay policy.

Grades for roles will continue to be determined by the NJC Job Evaluation Scheme implemented through our Job Family Framework.

## **Pay Awards**

For the future, Epping Forest salary ranges will be benchmarked against the Public & Not for Profit Market, and NJC pay awards will no longer apply, although the Council has agreed that annual pay awards will be no less than the NJC Award.

The Council will consider pay awards annually, and any award agreed will be applied at 1 April.

## **Remuneration of Chief Officers**

The Council will not agree any pay arrangement which does not reflect the correct employment and/or tax/NI status of a Chief Officer or employee.

It will be the responsibility of Council to agree the initial salaries for Chief Officers following external advice/evaluation/benchmarking. At Epping, Chief Officers are determined as the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Chief Operating Officer.

### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive is paid a spot salary of £146,000 which includes compensation for all other allowances that might normally apply (i.e. evening meeting payments). The Chief Executive may also benefit from a performance payment of up to £5,000 (non-consolidated) if targets and objectives, set by the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny and Committee, together with an independent facilitator, are met. ~~For future years, any performance payment will be unconsolidated unless a further review of base salary is undertaken.~~

The Chief Executive is also the Council's Head of Paid Service and the Returning Officer (for which additional fees are paid).

### **Strategic Directors**

In January 2020, Cabinet agreed a new organisation structure which permanently established 2 Strategic Director roles and a role of Chief Operating Officer, all at a spot salary of £116,725 together with the opportunity of flexibility of benefits. One Strategic Director is currently seconded to Qualis.

### **Termination Payments**

On ceasing to be employed by the Council, individuals will only receive compensation:

- in circumstances that are relevant (e.g. redundancy), and
- in accordance with our published Pension Policy on how we exercise the various employer discretions provided by the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), and/or that complies with the specific term(s) of a compromise agreement.

All employees with contracts of 3 months or more are automatically enrolled into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which is administered by Essex County Council. Payments on grounds of Redundancy are covered by the Council's Redundancy and Efficiency Payments Policy.

All employees are treated in the same way with regard to the calculation of severance payments in situations of redundancy.

### **Statutory Roles**

The statutory roles of Monitoring Officer and 'Section 151' Officer will be carried out by the Head of Legal and the Strategic Director. These positions do not need to be held by Chief Officers. The Monitoring Officer role will receive an additional £5,000 supplement for these statutory responsibilities. The 'Section 151' Officer has this in their base salary.

### **Definition of Lowest Paid Employees**

For the purpose of this Policy Statement, employees on grade A are defined as our lowest-paid employees.

At 1 April 2021, the fte annual value of the minimum of the Growth Zone of Grade A was £19,021.

The exceptions to the lowest grade are Apprentices who are paid £160 per week. When apprentices move into year 2 of their placement, they receive the minimum wage for their age.

## Pay Multiples

The Hutton Review raised concerns about multiples in the order of 20 or higher between the lowest and the highest paid employees in local authorities. However the Interim Report noted that the most top to bottom pay multiples in the public sector are in the region of 8:1 to 12:1. The Council is therefore content that having due regard for the level of responsibilities and personal accountability between the lowest and highest paid roles, the current multiple of 7.6 seems to be both justifiable and equitable.

The council does not set the remuneration of any individual or group of posts by reference to a multiple. However, as suggested by the Hutton Review the Council will monitor multiples over time to ensure they are appropriate and fair and will explain significant changes in pay multiples. The multiples are as following;

Role	2021/2022	
	Multiple	Salary
Chief Executive compared to lowest salary	x 7.6	£146,000
Strategic Directors compared to lowest salary	x 6.1	£116,725
Average salary compared to Chief Executive	x 3.9	£36,883
Average salary compared to lowest salary	x 1.9	£36,883

- The average salary is based on fte and has not been pro-rata'd for part-time employees
- The lowest fte salary in the Council is £19,021 in 2021/2022

## Other Payments

Market Supplements may be paid in accordance with the Council's Policy for Payment of Market Supplements (although where necessary to secure or retain the employment of essential staff, other means may be applied to achieve the same outcome).

Honorarium or ex-gratia payments will be paid in accordance with our Additional Payments Policy.

The Council does not currently apply performance related pay or bonuses (except for in the case of the Chief Executive), but this may change generally at a future date, and may be applied as part of a personal contract of employment if required to secure the employment

and retention of essential employees. Under local pay arrangements, the Council may consider the award of a Council wide or Team bonus at any point paid, on the basis of agreed targets/outputs. Such bonus will take the form of an unconsolidated payment and will not affect substantive pay.

These policies are applied consistently to all employees.

APPENDIX 1

Grade	Growth Zone £	Salary for Role £	Exception Zone £
A	19021 – 19430	19530	19630 – 19694
B	19794 – 20291	20391	20491 – 20809
C	20909 – 22011	22111	22211 – 22636
D	22736 – 24801	24901	25101 – 25986
E	26086 – 28737	28837	28937 – 30046
F	30146 – 32883	32983	33083 – 33903
G	34003 – 37863	37963	38063 – 38978
H	39078 – 42974	43074	43174 - 44154
I	44254 - 48188	48288	48388 - 50955
J	51055 - 55176	55276	55376 - 58263
K	58363 - 62085	62185	62285 - 63945

Committee	May	June	July	August	Septeml	Octobe	Novemt	Decemb	January	Februar	March	April	May
Appointments Panel		17											16
Council	26		28			11		13		28		4	25
Constitution Working Group		30					1			2			
Audit & Governance Committee		27			29		28			13	20		
Cabinet (9)		6	18		19	17	7	5		6	13	6	
Local Plan Cabinet Committee (4)			4			31			30		27		
Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee (4)		20			12			12				3	
Overview & Scrutiny Committee		16	26		27		29		31		28		
Stronger Communities Select Committee (5)			12		20		15		17		2, 21		
Stronger Council Select Committee			21		1	25	24		24	21		18	
Stronger Place Select Committee (4)			5		13		8		16		7		
Joint Consultative Committee		14				6			26			13	
Joint Meeting of Development Management Chairmen & Vice-Chairmen					15					14			
Joint Meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen & Vice-Chairmen		28						6					
Licensing Committee						19					22		
Licensing Sub Committee		7, 21	5, 19	2, 16	6, 20	4, 25	8, 22	6, 20	17	7,21	7, 21	4, 18	
District Development Management Committee		29		24	21		16		18		15		
Area Planning Sub-Committee East	11	15	13	10	7	5	2, 30		4	1	1	5	
Area Planning Sub-Committee South		8	6	3,31	28	26	23	21	25	22	29	26	
Area Planning Sub-Committee West	18	22	20	17	14	12	9	7	11	8	8	12	17
Local Councils' Liaison Committee (2)					26					20			
Bank Holiday		2	2,3		29				2			7, 10	1
Election		5											4

This page is intentionally left blank