



NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL to be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 13 December 2022 for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Blakemore'.

Georgina Blakemore
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services
Officer:**

Gary Woodhall / J Leither Tel: (01992) 564243
Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

WEBCASTING/FILMING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. The meeting may also be otherwise filmed by third parties with the Chairman's permission.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Therefore by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area or otherwise indicate to the Chairman before the start of the meeting.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Public Relations Manager on 01992 564542.

BUSINESS**1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking. The Democratic and Electoral Services Team Manager will read the following announcement:

“The chairman would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery.”

2. FORMER COUNCILLOR ANN HAIGH

The Council is invited to stand for a minute’s silence in tribute to the memory of former District Councillor Ann Haigh who has recently passed away.

Ann Haigh was appointed to the Council in 1996 and served until May 2010. She represented the Buckhurst Hill East Ward of the District as a Liberal Democrat Councillor and during her term of office was been appointed to many of the Council’s member bodies.

Former Councillor Ann Haigh was appointed Chairman of Council for the 2006/07 municipal year and was a great supporter of the arts and culture, as well as doing much to bring people of different faiths together. She was the last chairman of the District Council’s Leisure Services Committee before the adoption of the new cabinet model.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To be announced at the meeting.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

5. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 20)

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022, as attached.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Chairman’s Announcements

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within Part 4 of the Council Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which

the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Leader of the Council;
- (b) to any Portfolio Holder; or
- (c) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

8. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within the Council's rules in Part 4 of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;
- (c) to any Member of the Cabinet; or
- (d) the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee.

The Council's rules provide 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.

9. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 21 - 50)

To receive reports and any announcements from the Leader and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility:

- (a) Report of the Leader of Council (verbal);
- (b) Report of the Place Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (c) Report of the Finance Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (d) Report of the Housing & Community Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (e) Report of the Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder (attached);

- (f) Report of the Customer Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (g) Report of the Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (h) Report of the Technical Services Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (i) Report of the Internal Resources Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (j) Report of the Reviews & Efficiency Portfolio Holder (attached);

10. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

The Council's rules provide for questions by any member of the Council to the Leader or any Portfolio Holder, without notice on:

- (i) reports under the previous item; or
- (ii) any other matter of a non operational character in relation to the powers and duties of the Council or which affects all or part of the District or some or all of its inhabitants.

The Council's rules provide that answers to questions without notice may take the form of:

- (a) a direct oral answer from the Leader or, at the request of the Leader, from another member of the Cabinet;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner; or
- (d) where the question relates to an operational matter, the Leader or a member of the Cabinet will request that a response be given direct to the questioner by the relevant Service Director.

In accordance with the Council's rules, a time limit of thirty minutes is set for questions. Any question not dealt with within the time available will receive a written reply. The Chairman may extend this period by up to a further ten minutes at their discretion.

11. MOTIONS

To consider any motions, notice of which has been given under the Council's rules.

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

12. CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2027 (Pages 51 - 66)

(The Leader of Council) To consider the attached report recommending that the new Corporate Plan for the period 2023 – 2027 be agreed.

13. BOUNDARY REVIEW - RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION (Pages 67 - 72)

That Council approve the consultation response as set out in Section 3 of the report attached for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission (England).

14. INDEPENDENT MEMBER REMUNERATION PANEL - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME (Pages 73 - 100)

Stephen Lye, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, to present a report to Council recommending the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2023/24.

15. CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP (Pages 101 - 104)

(Chairman of the Constitution Working Group) To consider the attached report recommending that the Constitution be amended as detailed in the report.

16. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Pages 105 - 106)

To receive the report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to answer any questions without notice asked in accordance with Council Rules.

17. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS & EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

(a) To receive from Council representatives the reports (attached - if any) on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations and to receive answers to any questions on those bodies which may be put without notice; and

(b) To request written reports from representatives on joint arrangements and external organisations for future meetings.

18. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion: To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
Nil	Nil	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Background Papers: Article 17 of the Constitution (Access to Information) define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

(a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and

(b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee:	Council	Date:	Tuesday, 11 October 2022
Place:	Council Chamber - Civic Offices	Time:	7.00 - 8.35 pm
Members Present:	Councillors M Sartin (Chairman), D Sunger (Vice-Chairman), I Allgood, C Amos, R Balcombe, R Baldwin, R Bassett, N Bedford, P Bolton, H Brady, R Brookes, I Hadley, H Kane, S Kane, P Keska, J Leppert, A Lion, J Lucas, T Matthews, C McCredie, L Mead, R Morgan, S Murray, C Nweke, S Patel, J Philip, Caroline Pond, C C Pond, R Pugsley, K Rizvi, B Rolfe, P Stalker, B Vaz, C Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse, K Williamson and D Wixley		
Members Present (Virtually):	Councillors P Bhanot, E Gabbett, S Heap and H Whitbread		
Apologies:	L Burrows, S Heather, R Jennings, J Jennings, J Jogia, H Kauffman, J Lea, J McIvor, M Owen, A Patel, S Rackham, D Stocker and S Yerrell		
Officers Present:	G Blakemore (Chief Executive), A Small (Section 151 Officer), G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer), T Carne (Corporate Communications Team Manager) and P Seager (Chairman's Officer)		
Officers Present (Virtually):	N Boateng (Service Manager (Legal) & Monitoring Officer) and L Kirman (Democratic Services Officer)		

26. 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.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 October 2022 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

29. IN MEMORY OF HER MAJESTY THE LATE QUEEN ELIZABETH II

The Chairman invited Council to join her in two minutes silence as a mark of respect for the late Queen Elizabeth II.

The Chairman of Council delivered the first response followed by the Leader of Council, Group Leaders and other Members of the Council who paid fitting and respectful tributes to Her late Majesty.

The Council expressed its sadness at the passing of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and conveyed their gratitude and thanks for Her late Majesty's unstinting and dedicated service to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth Realms during her 70 year reign.

30. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Announcements by the Chairman of the Council

(i) Operation London Bridge

The Chairman expressed her sincere thanks to Tom Carne, the Corporate Communications team and all those involved who worked extremely hard in the period following on from the death of Her late Majesty. She also recognised the hard and dedicated work of Pat Seager, who had been involved in coordinating every aspect of what had to be put in place as set out in 'Operation London Bridge'. Her attention to detail ensured that everything which had to be done, was done in an extremely professional manner.

This included working with the Reverend Lee Batson and Epping Town Council to organise a very well attended service to commemorate the life of Her late Majesty, which was held in St John's Church in Epping on the 14 September 2022.

The Chairman also thanked everyone for attending the service and also for attending the Civic Offices for the reading of the Proclamation of the Accession of King Charles III.

The Chairman advised that she represented the district at the Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving which was held in Chelmsford Cathedral on the 18 September 2022

(ii) Children's Summer Holiday Activities

The Chairman highlighted the Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder report regarding the Children's Summer Holiday Activities that was put in place by the Council. She advised that she attended a few of the activities, which were very well attended and appreciated by the parents of the children who attended these activities.

The Play in the Park roadshows was one of activities that happened in different wards of the district and it was thought, that in the coming year, it would be good for members to attend this event in their ward to see what was being provided for our young people in the district.

(iii) Opening of Spinks House

The Chairman attended the opening of Spinks House, a pair of semidetached houses in Waltham Abbey, which had been named after the late former Councillor Don Spinks. She cut the ribbon alongside his widow Liz Webster, who was also a former member of the Council and a Waltham Abbey Town Councillor.

31. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

Question by Mr Jim Padfield, resident of Moreton and High Laver to Councillor J Philip, Finance Portfolio Holder.

Tilegate Farm

The residential development of nine acres of open field Green Belt in Magdalen Laver remains a source of concern for the Residents of the Lavers. Documentation downloaded and retained by the Parish Council Clerk from the Council's Planning Search website indicates that Officers granted a residential permission to a newly erected "stables". The permission included the dumping of many hundreds of tons of waste material under the pretext of "landscaping". The Parish Council notified the District Council about the dumping and queried the residential permission. The entire Application documentation was then internally removed from the Council records including from EFDC Planning Search.

The investigation undertaken by the District Councils Internal Auditors denies the veracity of the Parish Clerk's documents copied from the Councils website, they state: "Without a proper digital forensic investigation, which would be costly to the Council, the documents you submitted as evidence of their existence cannot be verified." No consideration has been given by the Auditor as to how and why a Parish Council Clerk would both fraudulently construct these documents and also fabricate the associated contemporaneous email trail between the Parish Council and the District Council. No explanation has been given as to why the "Stables" were built to residential standards. This issue is just one of many on the site. Yet another Application is pending. Probity in the planning system is absolutely critical to its function. Should not the Council now properly investigate this issue whatever the cost?

Response given by Councillor J Philip, Finance Portfolio Holder.

At the request of the Chief Executive, the Chief Internal Auditor, who was independent of the Council, and the Council's Corporate Fraud Manager examined seventeen allegations from Mr Padfield suggesting potential fraud and collusion regarding the Tilegate Development. The investigation involved interviews with relevant officers and a review of planning files as well as the documentation available to the public on the Council's website.

On the 19 April 2022, the Chief Internal Auditor gave a detailed reply back to Mr Padfield, to each of the 17 allegations and concluded in her letter, "Our investigation has not found any evidence of fraud by Council officers. The information supplied by the applicant has been appropriately scrutinised by officers and there was no evidence of favouritism. Several officers were involved in the process and sign off / approval was granted at the appropriate levels. Unless you are able to provide new or fresh evidence of fraud, I deem this investigation to be closed."

On 20 April 2022 Mr Padfield formally replied to the Chief Internal Auditor's letter with further concerns regarding the residential stable conversion, with the nub of Mr Padfield's email being the Council's denial of the existence of an application. As with the original investigation, the relevant officers were interviewed, with a review of planning files, as well as the documentation available to the public on the Council's website. The Chief Internal Auditor concluded "The 'missing' application was thoroughly investigated by officers at the time and she was content with their conclusions. Without a proper digital forensic investigation, which would be costly to the Council, the documents submitted as evidence of their existence cannot be

verified. Both this allegation and the previous one was about officers colluding. As with my original investigation, this investigation has found that proper processes have been followed with adequate oversight by Senior Officers. There was no evidence of collusion between officers or the Applicant.

Regarding why “no explanation has been given as to why the ‘Stables’ were built to residential standards,” the Chief Internal Auditor was unable to comment on this, as that was down to the professional judgement, she stated that she was unqualified to do so. Instead, she ensured the Council followed the correct processes and that there was adequate evidence to corroborate this.

Supplementary question from Mr Jim Padfield to Councillor J Philip, Finance Portfolio Holder

Why are you not policing more diligently the delegated powers given to officers?

Reply of Councillor J Philip, Finance Portfolio Holder

We do scrutinise very carefully the delegated decisions that are made by officers. We have been through the Constitution Working Group on many occasions looking at which decisions are delegated. A decision by members who have an application in their ward are able to call that decision in then it would go to a planning committee meeting. It is equally possible for planning and Town and Parish Councils to indicate on planning grounds why they want an application to come to committee, as long as they are willing to attend that committee meeting and speak on behalf of the Town or Parish Council. Members we have looked into this matter in great detail and there is no evidence of what Mr Padfield was alleging and he was confident, that on this occasion, the Council had followed their processes correctly.

32. 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.

33. 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 asked for his name to be associated with the Chairmans earlier comments on congratulating Pat Seager, Tom Carne and the Corporate Communications Team on how well and professional they acted on bringing Operation London Bridge into fruition.

Since the last Council meeting, he reported that he had been having regular meetings with the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town board, separate to the meetings where issues were discussed that were pertinent to Epping Forest in making sure that it was understood what was happening.

He advised that the Council were also playing an active role in the devolution piece following on from the Governments White Paper on Levelling Up. There was a certain element of this paper that the Council hoped to get the best from for the district in the future. It was not devolution that was originally anticipated with local

government reform, this was very much around seeing how the Council can operate better as a West Essex Alliance. The work between Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest along that corridor were going to become more important as time goes on, bearing in mind, that the Government have now announced investment loans. This Council was committed to getting the best we can for the people of Epping Forest, whether that be in skills, employment and opportunities because we want to see Epping Forest prosper and do well. In order to do this, as a Council, we need to make sure that we remain in a good financial position and stated that he had been working closely with Councillor J Philip, Finance Portfolio Holder to deliver a budget in the most productive way possible.

He stated that he was proud of the progress that this Council were making with its Council Housebuilding Programme, where we were seeing the delivery of quality council homes for the future.

The Corporate Plan was being developed, which was a strategic document for the future and was an important piece of work that we had been doing collaboratively across the council which has been challenging as it was a very difficult time for everyone, the cost-of-living crisis that was affecting residents across the district, and the impact on us as a Council as we were all affected by inflation.

(b) Internal Resources Portfolio Holder

Councillor S Kane advised that he would like to update members on the Local Land Charges position. Members will be aware that there had been quite a backlog over the last few months with up to 10 weeks and more for land searches to be completed. This was a result of a government initiative to centralise the registry search function with an online database. The Council have had to upload over 60,000 records to the central system, which required data cleansing, data formatting having to re-submit file errors to the government database. He stated that he was pleased to inform members that the government have now accepted the data that we have updated and the team were now busy working on the backlog which they have gotten down to 7 weeks and by the end of this month we should be back to the normal 10 day turnaround time.

(c) Finance Portfolio Holder

Councillor J Philip advised that looking forward to next year the financial situation was bad. Just to summarise we have a projected expenditure of somewhere in the region of £19 million and a predicted income of around £15 million therefore leaving a gap of around £4 million between what we need and what we think we have got. The HRA was all right at the moment but in 10 or 11 years' time it will move into a more challenging financial position but we have the time to work on that and I know that Councillor H Whitbread will be looking at the 30 year plan to bring that into balance.

This Council had a real problem coming in the next financial year and were looking at that gap of £4 million. There were a lot of things we did not yet know and probably wont know for a while in terms of where inflation was going, what were the costs going to be for energy supplies and how much money the Council were going to get from Government, we were therefore taking our best estimates at the moment and he fully expected those estimates to change between now and when a report comes to Cabinet in December with an updated view of the budget. He also expected the budget to change again at Januarys Cabinet and the final budget to Council in February 2023.

He stated that the Council would continue to protect its frontline services and make sure that the most vulnerable in our society were looked after but there will be costs and will be things that we have to pass on. A detailed report will go to scrutiny but at this moment in time so much was unknown.

(d) Housing Portfolio Holder

Councillor H Whitbread highlighted the event with the opening of Spinks House in Waltham Abbey. She thanked the Chairman for attending and former district Councillor Liz Webster and stated that these two large family homes in the heart of Waltham Abbey were a real testament to how successful the Councils house building programme had been. These new houses have been built to the highest standards in an energy efficient way particularly in mind of the current energy crisis in trying to reduce the cost of energy for our tenants.

The HRA account was something she was going to be looking at in close detail in the coming weeks and months, considering the challenges around inflation and how this may affect the future of the Councils Housebuilding programme. A comprehensive 30 year business plan had been set regarding regeneration and council house building which may now have to be slightly modified to take into account the cost of borrowing. She highlighted that this Council was very focused on council housebuilding and their regeneration programme.

She advised that she had been involved in an event held in collaboration with Voluntary Action Epping Forest which hosted Ukrainian refugees and their host families in the Civic Offices. This was an opportunity to introduce these people to the various relevant community partners from the NHS who attended and gave out covid vaccinations, the local Job Centre, the Community Police team and the Councils housing team. As well as being an information event it also gave the refugees and host families to socialise.

Last month she advised that she visited the Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey along with the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Citizens Advice and NHS Partners and got involved with a door knocking activity where we were seeking to find people who had various different needs and required support. This was really a successful event with hundreds of doors knocked on and support and referrals given where necessary.

(e) Place Portfolio Holder

Councillor N Bedford advised that following on from Inspector Jonathan Ball who had been working very closely with the Council and the officers who have been doing an extremely diligent job in making sure that they get the changes to the further main modifications to the Local Plan. We were expected to launch at the end of the month and there will be an update on the website. It was critical that we are clear what this stage of the consultation was about, which was the further changes to the further main modifications only and it was not an opportunity to resubmit previous representations or main modifications that have not changed. Some points to note were that representations will be encouraged to be made online as much as possible, although emails and hard submissions were possible.

E-mail and phone contacts for Planning Policy would be provided for those with queries and updated guidance made available. All material will be made available online and would be supported by hard copies at the Civic Offices and at libraries. Members will be updated via the members briefing notes notification which will go out

externally to consultee on the database and via Council press and social media promotions.

We were ensuring officer awareness across the Council via the staff news letter with direct liaison across teams.

34. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

(a) Refuse Services

Councillor S Murray stated his question was to the Contracts and Commissioning Portfolio Holder and in his absence, he asked if he could put his question to the Leader of Council?

He stated that there had been varying differences with the refuse services recently and he noted that the Council were going out to tender for the contract, he asked what lessons have the Council learnt from this experience over the last 6 months and how were those lessons going to be reflected in the new tender?

Councillor C Whitbread stated that he arrived home from work this evening to find his bin had not been emptied, the bottles hadn't either and the recycling bags had blown across the road. He sympathised with residents as he knew and understood their frustrations with the service Biffa were currently affording to residents across the district.

There had recently been a meeting with Biffa where we asked them for more live information to be supplied to us and to his knowledge that had not happened. Their website was never up to date with the correct information and he was as frustrated as every other resident in the district with this problem.

The lessons learned, not all of this was Biffa's fault. A year ago, we were commending Biffa for keeping their operations running smoothly during the Pandemic, so what has changed. Biffa were currently trying to retain a workforce and that was the biggest issue.

The Council do not have money they have residents' money to pay for services and we will make sure, as a Council, that we hold Biffa responsible for providing this service.

(b) Council House Delivery

Councillor H Kane asked the Housing Portfolio Holder if she could advise about the Council's record of the council house delivery and regeneration in Waltham Abbey?

Councillor H Whitbread advised that Waltham Abbey was the place where the Council started its house building programme 10 years ago. There were 10 properties that were due to be delivered in Waltham Abbey this year, there was Spinks House, which had been referred to earlier in her portfolio holder report, this consisted of two large new family homes for local people. There was another development in Waltham Abbey which would provide another 8 affordable units. Waltham Abbey was a key place where the Council want to deliver new homes. We have, as a Council, always been committed to continue with the delivery of new Council housing stock and the 30-year business plan set out an ambitious target for delivery.

Harveyfields in Waltham Abbey recently had £114,000 spent on a regeneration programme which included, tidying up the bin areas, looking at the paving and the outdoor spaces. Regeneration was the core of the Councils bricks and mortar which she spoke about often in meetings.

(c) Homeless Enquiries

Councillor C Amos referred to the report of the Housing Portfolio Holder and asked about the 91 homeless enquiries during the month of August and wondered if for future reports if members could have a summary as to how all those homeless people were helped with their enquiries.

Considering the financial challenges that we were all facing at present she thought homelessness would become a more pressing issue. She went on to explain that the people she had referred to in her report were homeless but not rough sleepers. The usual process would be that they would contact the Council and be put into temporary accommodation whilst more permanent accommodation was sought and whilst in temporary accommodation the Council officers would give them various support and advice. One area where there had been great success around homelessness prevention and the numbers that we were now seeing have increased.

Homelessness adds a pressure to the general fund and also to the Councils temporary housing stock, we were therefore mindful to help these people and get them out of temporary accommodation as soon as possible. We also try to keep homeless people in the Councils own properties such as Norway House and Hemnall House but due to the increased demand we do have some people in B&B accommodation. She advised that she would be happy to provide a detailed summary in her next report to Council.

Action: A detailed summary of homeless people to be provided in the next Portfolio Holder report to Council.

(d) Tree Planting

Councillor C C Pond advised his question was to the Technical Services Portfolio Holder. Last winter a large number of trees were planted further to a grant on Jessel Green and Rochford Green in Loughton. There was a considerable amount of attrition generally from trees but because these trees were planted quite late in the year many of them have failed. What were the plans and the financial situation as to how the failed trees might be replaced as this was now the tree planting season and remedial action needed to be taken soon.

Councillor K Williamson advised that he did not know the situation regarding the trees, but he would speak to officers and get back to him.

Action: Councillor Williamson to provide details to Councillor Pond regarding the failed trees.

(e) Safer Streets Scheme

Councillor T Matthews asked the Housing Portfolio Holder for an update on the Safer Streets Scheme on Ninefields in Waltham Abbey and if she could elaborate the work around the door knocking activities with the Community Partners.

Councillor H Whitbread advised that over £300,00 worth of investment was going into the Ninefields Estate. This was a grant received from the Home Office working in

partnership with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and had been matched funded by the District Council. This grant would be used to improve spaces by increasing lighting, CCTV, litter and fly tipping on the estate and generally making it a more pleasant environment for people to live. There was also ongoing work with the Ninefields Residents' Association and meeting with key community partners to decide how this money was going to be allocated.

The door knocking scheme was led by the Fire and Rescue Service and the first question they asked residents was 'do you have a fire alarm fitted and working', if the answer was no then they would go into the properties and replace or install new fire alarms.

Also involved were representatives from the NHS and Mental Health Services who were asking people if they had any issues with their health and then trying to get them some help and support that they required. EFDC's Community Champions and Officers, who did a fantastic job of co-ordinating, helping to collate the information and signposted people to the support they needed.

This was a trial that took place in Ninefields, which was a condensed area and it was something the Council were keen to roll out across the district, particularly in some of our more deprived areas.

(f) Rising Energy Crisis

Councillor S Patel asked the Housing Portfolio Holder if the Council were looking into warm rooms or those types of schemes for our residents?

Councillor H Whitbread stated that numerous conversations had happened with voluntary partners around warm rooms as she was conscious about the ever-increasing energy bills. There had been a price guarantee from the Government which should help to ease some of the issues, but some people will still be struggling with energy costs. Voluntary Action Epping Forest were looking at initiatives around various community hubs for delivering a scheme.

Essex County Council will be giving grants to Town and Parish Councils and community groups to set up appropriate warm spaces for people to go to sit in the warm with a hot drink. This Council was looking to deliver this scheme in conjunction with our community partners.

(g) Local Plan

Councillor S Heap asked the Place Portfolio Holder that according to the Local Plan this district had to build 2.6 dwellings every day and did he think this could be achieved?

Councillor N Bedford advised that the Council were bringing forward the Local Plan and if 2.6 dwelling per day was the target then yes, the Council would have to adhere to that figure. He reminded members that the Council had already built many dwellings which would also be included in that figure and now the backlog from the SAC was being cleared and further dwellings were in the pipeline to be built. Some of the planning applications now coming forward have increased the numbers on sites.

He therefore concluded that the Council were getting back on track and moving forward to meet their targets and deliver the Local Plan in a timely manner.

(h) Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy

Councillor J M Whitehouse advised that his question was to the Place Portfolio Holder and stated that it was now getting on for 2 years since the interim air pollution mitigation strategy was adopted and asked if there were any updates on the results of the monitoring that had been carried out and were there any changes in air pollution since it was adopted. He also asked about the allocation of funds from the Section 106 agreements.

He noted that the last meeting of the Portfolio Holder Advisory Working Group had been cancelled and wondered if a new meeting had been arranged and if so, what was the date.

Councillor N Bedford stated that the Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy was agreed 2 years ago and the air quality monitoring was not due to take place until 2024, this may be brought forward to 2023. All signs currently point to the air quality being improved but this was due to Covid and the lockdown but also there had been a massive increase to the number of electric vehicles and changing habits of road drivers going through the forest.

Another contributory factor was the Mayor of London will be bringing forward his plans, which all residents have been made aware of that next year he will be imposing the ULEZ up to the boundary with Epping Forest. This will impact on the residents of Epping Forest and we were doing everything that we can to be in discussions with the Mayors office to see what we can bring forward but unfortunately we were only a small cog in the Mayors wheel and all of the surrounding boroughs around London will want to bring in similar schemes.

The S106 monies have been accruing and these funds have been set aside for the air quality monitoring.

The Portfolio Holder Advisory Group meeting was cancelled as there was nothing to contribute to that meeting but if members have any new ideas or items for discussion, please bring them forward. He stated that he looked forward to the next Portfolio Holder Advisory Group meeting, to be arranged.

(i) Street Trees

Councillor D Wixley advised his question was to the Technical Services Portfolio Holder and stated that he understood that EFDC planted street trees on behalf of Essex County Council who provide the funding for that. He had recently been informed that the funding had been substantially reduced for last year and he wondered what the current situation was and how many street trees can be planted this year.

Councillor K Williamson advised that he could not provide an answer but would speak with officers and get back to Councillor Wixley.

Action: To provide an answer to Councillor Wixley's question regarding the planting of street trees.

(j) Land Searches

Councillor S Murray asked the Internal Resources Portfolio Holder that did he realise the delay on land searches could have a very real effect, particularly of first-time property buyers who were negotiating mortgage deals, which were short-term limited

offers and did he have idea of how many first-time buyers have lost their deals due to waiting for land searches. When they lose these deals, they then have to negotiate a new deal which costs more. Therefore, did the Portfolio Holder understand the impact to house buyers and did he have any evidence of how many people have lost mortgage deals because of the delay in waiting for land searches?

Councillor S Kane advised that he did understand the impact of house buyers waiting for land searches and stated that he had no way of knowing how many people had lost their mortgage deals as that information would not be available to him. He stated that this was in no way avoidable, it was a government edict and the Council had to do this by milestones, it was their dates and the scale of the work was not known beforehand. We submitted our data and then an unknown number then came back to be corrected with a finite date for those to be re-submitted. He realised the impact on people was 10 weeks and more waiting time but I am pleased to say that we were over that hurdle now and can focus on reducing the backlog and returning to normal within a month.

35. MOTIONS

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

36. ONGAR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Mover: Councillor N Bedford, Place Portfolio Holder

Councillor N Bedford advised that all the details of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan were contained in the report on page 59 of the agenda

He had asked officers to prepare some questions and answers that he may have been asked or assist in understanding the plan and what implications it might have going forward:

(a) What weight will the policies in the Ongar Neighbour Plan have once it was made (adopted) by the Council?

Once the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' by the Council it would form part of the statutory development plan. Consequently, its policies will carry full weight in assessing planning applications where the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan was considered to be a material consideration. This is stated in paragraph 1.2 of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan itself.

(b) What happens if a policy or policies contained within the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan conflicted with a policy or policies in the adopted Local Plan (adopted 1998 with alterations 2006)?

The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan had been developed with full regard to the policies contained in the adopted Local Plan. However should a policy conflict arise between the two Plans [Section 38\(5\) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) requires that the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to become part of the development plan. This would therefore be the policy or policies in the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan.

(c) What is the relationship between the policies in the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan's and the policies in the emerging Local Plan?

There was no legal requirement to examine the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan policies against policies in the emerging Plan. However, as the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan states at section 5.4 'Local Strategic Policies':

'It is advisable to take account of the emerging Epping Forest Local Plan 2011 to 2033. The evidence behind the emerging local plan was part of the evidence base for the neighbourhood plan (where relevant).'

It goes on to state in the same section that:

'The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group ONPCG) has worked in liaison with Epping Forest District Council throughout the preparation of the plan to reduce the risk of disparities between the emerging Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.'

(d) What weight will the policies in the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan (ONP) have if the emerging Local Plan was adopted by the Council in the future?

The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan will sit alongside a newly adopted Local Plan as part of the Development Plan and as such its policies will continue to attract full weight in relation to planning applications where the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan was considered to be a material consideration.

(e) What happens if a policy or policies contained within the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan conflicted with a newly adopted Local Plan policy or policies?

Section 5.4 'Local Strategic Policies' of the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan states that:

'The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group ONPCG) has worked in liaison with Epping Forest District Council throughout the preparation of the plan to reduce the risk of disparities between the emerging Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.'

However should a policy conflict arise between the two Plans [Section 38\(5\) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) requires that the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which was contained in the last document to become part of the development plan. This would therefore be the policy or policies contained in any newly adopted Local Plan.

(f) Will the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan need to change as the emerging Local Plan progresses towards potential adoption, if a new local Plan was adopted?

The Examining Inspector for the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan stated on page 11 of her examination report in relation to the emerging Local Plan that:

'There are also a number of references throughout the Plan to the emerging local plan. These references will need to be carefully reviewed to ensure they are up to date and clearly indicate the emerging status of the local plan and may well have to be changed as the Plan progresses to its next stages.'

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' (adopted) as part of the Epping Forest District's statutory development plan.

37. AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**Councillor P Bolton, Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee**

Councillor P Bolton reported on the Audit & Governance Annual Report for 2021/22.

The Finance Portfolio Holder, Councillor J Philip thanked Councillor I Hadley, Chairman for the 2021/22 municipal year and members of the Audit and Governance Committee for their work throughout the year

RESOLVED:

That the Audit & Governance Annual Report for 2021/22 be noted.

38. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**Councillor H Kane, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor H Kane presented her progress report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on the 26 July 2022 and 27 September 2022.

She advised that an extra meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been called for Thursday 3 November 2022 to scrutinise the business case for the transfer of the Grounds Maintenance to Qualis.

RESOLVED:

That the progress report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on the 26 July 2022 and 27 September 2022 be noted.

39. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS & EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**(a) The Royal Gunpowder Mills**

The Council received a written the report regarding the Royal Gunpowder Mills from Councillor H Kane, the Council's representative. She advised that the Royal Gunpowder Mills was now open to the public every weekend and that there were lots of tourists visiting from all over the country but very few from the district.

(b) There were no requests made for written reports by representatives on joint arrangements and external organisations for the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Place Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Bedford

Recommending:

That the report of the Place Portfolio Holder be noted.

1. Local Plan progress update

The Council, in conjunction with the Plan Inspector, has finalised the proposed further Main Modifications that it considers are required to the Local Plan in order to meet the tests of soundness. Consultation on the further Main Modifications commenced on 28 October 2022 and will conclude on 09 December. It is essential that the scope of this further consultation is effectively communicated. Representations are invited only upon the further Main Modifications and supporting documents to the further Main Modifications. Respondents should not re-submit previous representations or make representations on Main Modifications that have not changed, and any such responses will not be considered by the Inspector.

Reflecting that the Council is keen to move towards the conclusion of the Examination and the final adoption of the Plan as soon as possible at the beginning of 2023, it will collate and share all representations with the Planning Inspector as swiftly as possible following the consultation. Once the Inspector has considered the responses, including the evidence presented throughout the duration of the Examination, he will determine whether the Local Plan is 'sound' and produce a written report outlining his final recommendations. Following receipt of the Inspector's report and providing he determines it 'sound', the Plan can be formally adopted by the Council if it makes all the Main Modifications.

2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT)

The HGGT aims to coordinate and enable delivery of 16,000 homes by 2033, along with associated infrastructure, delivering the Garden Town Vision, principles and guidance that has been agreed by the 5 partner councils. 3,900 of these homes are allocated within Epping Forest District, making up over a third of the district's allocated housing.

EFDC officers continue to liaise with key stakeholders across the five Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) authorities and relevant site promoters. This is undertaken in the context of wider Garden Town activities. Key updates in terms of the Garden Town are:

- The draft Latton Priory Strategic Masterplan Framework is currently being publicly consulted upon running from 17th October to the 9th January 2023. For full information, or to comment or complete a questionnaire on the masterplan, you can visit the website www.lattonpriory.co.uk. Hard copies of the draft SMF and questionnaire are also available at the Civic Offices reception.

- The Garden Town team is progressing work on the STC Connector Route Studies, for Water Lane, Latton Priory and East of Harlow. The updated HGGT Infrastructure Delivery Plan is in the fact-checking process, and the draft HGGT Green Infrastructure Framework is progressing to be endorsed by the HGGT Board early in 2023.
- Harlow & Gilston Garden Town was a winner at the 2022 Essex Housing Awards, for the HGGT Transport Strategy. The event saw the partnership of five local councils take the award in the Building Garden Communities category for the best new or planned Garden Communities from design to construction, including zero carbon. The partnership's HGGT Transport Strategy focuses on healthier and more sustainable movement around the Garden Town, shortening journey times, improving public transport and enhancing walking and cycling routes.
- The Garden Town team has recently completed the Your Quality of Life consultation and is in the process of analysis and forming recommendations. There were over 7000 visits to the Commonplace platform, 1015 contributions and 553 individual respondents, which is a significant increase to previous consultations. The Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) funded this digital engagement and have been impressed by the scale and ambition of the project, which was also recently shortlisted for an Archiboo Award 2022 for Best Digital Engagement.
- The HGGT Online Travel Survey is live from 7th November to 4th December. This aims to get a more detailed understanding of how people of all ages and abilities move around the Garden Town, using different transport modes (e.g. walk, wheel, cycle, drive, bus etc). The request to complete the online travel survey has been sent out via letters to 10,000 homes across the Garden Town area.

3. Sustainable Transport

DaRT87 Demand Responsive Transport

Flexiroute Passenger app further delayed which continues to make recovery from pandemic aftermath very difficult. Targeted online activity and press release are all ready to go via EFDC, HGGT and Harlow Council comms once the app is ready. ECC confirms bus patronage is still depressed due to lack of 'traditional' 5 day per week commuting and concessionary passholder caution about public transport. Across all their service types (dial-a-ride, NHS, ECC contracted scheduled services, DaRT87), passengers carried by Epping Forest Community Transport (EFCT) have fallen from 100k per year pre-pandemic to around 35k in the last year.

Marketing leaflet produced at low cost aimed at lower tech audiences - Epping High Street stall on market day in October; distribution at Civic Hub via partners like Citizens Advice and DWP; article in Housing quarterly resident magazine; distribution at Epping and Harlow/Great Parndon libraries.

Exploratory meeting held with ECC to look at options from next April to include EFCT running some additional timetabled services on behalf of Vectare & ECC over the similar 31 routing (Western Harlow - Roydon – Epping Green – Epping/Coopersale). DaRT87 has proven demand exists from SW Harlow and Epping Green to reach Epping town and tube station so this may be a pragmatic option to consider next year. Harlow Council continue not to contribute directly to the service despite their residents benefitting from it.

EV Adoption and Public Charging

Government/DfT stats continue to give a mixed picture on the EV market locally. On the one hand at Q2/22 the EFDC area had the largest number of battery only EVs (BEV) on the roads of any Essex district at 1,330, up 73% on Q2/21. On the other hand, Essex and EFDC both lag at about half the all-England average for public EV chargers per 100k population. At end July 22 there were 34 chargers in EFDC area (now +4 with the Epping Tesco chargers). At least one third of local homes have no off-street parking, so if this continues, it will impose a ceiling on EV adoption. Taking into account EFDC's plans and known private chargers in the pipeline, the number of public chargers should at least double by the end of 2023 – this excludes the Qualis multi-storey car park in Epping and any ECC on-street charging trials.

Instavolt chargers at Oakwood Hill East continue to be well used with good user reactions and an uplift in parking revenues. A further four Instavolt chargers at Basons Lane car park, Ongar (an EV charging 'not-spot') and Debden are likely this year or early 2023. Ongar Business Centre (co-working/start-up business site) have been lobbying for public chargers in the town as they count 17 EV/PHEV users among their clients.

The cost of public EV charging has started to become a bigger concern recently, with two of Instavolt's rapid/ultra-rapid network competitors reaching the £1 per kWh level and most of the other networks including Instavolt raising headline prices by up to 50% over the last year and/or introducing fixed monthly charges in order to get best tariffs. Public confidence in the ongoing running cost benefits of EV versus petrol/diesel seems strong for now, but the recent Budget introduces VED ('road tax') for EVs from 2025 including EV commercial vehicles and any sustained reduction in petrol or diesel costs could delay adoption on a larger scale.

Workplace chargers for staff and clients/customers/visitors are something we wish to stimulate via a campaign in the Business Matters newsletter and other business to business engagement. This would feature a deal being worked out with a major supplier to multi-site businesses starting with a professional needs and technical assessment of sites and then a discount on installation and equipment. Government grants still exist for workplaces and also for landlords and flat leaseholders, subject to viability, but no longer to homeowners with off street parking.

UKSP Funded options

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Waltham Abbey still being explored – discussions with Broxbourne Council have started to ensure mutual benefits are identified across both councils' LCWIPs (for example east-west cross border active travel needs for employment/commuting, shopping/leisure and education). Rural England Prosperity Fund options and candidate identification has further proved demand exists for rural energy saving, generation and EV charging in key rural hubs like village halls, small business hubs and the visitor economy.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13th December 2022
Subject: Finance, Qualis and Economic Development Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance, Qualis and Economic Development Portfolio Holder be noted.

Finance

Budgetary Position and Budget Development for 2023/24

Yesterday Cabinet met to consider and agree their draft Budget Proposals for 2023/24. As I have previously stated, this has been, and continues to be, probably the most difficult budget that anyone with my Portfolio responsibility has ever had to put together.

The situation in the current financial year remains difficult and the position for next year is dynamic. There is still far less certainty than we need to put the budget together and to present a clear position. The budget is therefore built on what we know right now together with professional judgements made around the areas that we do not, e.g., the amount of Government Grant that the Council is likely to receive. As more information comes forward, it is possible that the final budget proposals might yet be quite different from those presented to Cabinet.

The Country continues to wrestle with the impact of economic uncertainty caused by international events and whilst the Government announced a fiscal strategy that will put the Country financially back on track, there is still considerable financial difficulty ahead for Epping Forest District Council and the residents it serves.

Despite these challenges the Cabinet has put forward a balanced budget, that protects the core services that residents value. There has had to be some difficult choices, but we all knew that this would have to be the case, and the Council has had to tighten its belt accordingly.

Yet, a massive amount has been taken out of the budget with very little loss of service. The reason for this being, that we have focused on income generation and efficiency measures to the greatest extent possible and this has greatly reduced the pressure on front line services.

The largest single element of the Council's budget is staff costs, and every vacancy and agency appointment has been carefully reviewed. A large number of vacant posts are able to be removed as a result, but unfortunately these alone are not sufficient to balance the budget and so some filled posts will also need to be saved as part of the budget

proposals. The Council has robust policies and procedures in place for this eventuality and through maximising redeployment and limited voluntary redundancy we anticipate that all but a small handful of posts can be saved without the need for compulsory redundancy. That we find ourselves in the position where this is necessary is very regrettable, but the enormity of the financial challenge facing the Council means that it cannot be avoided.

Members need to be realistic about the extent of the challenges facing the economy and the scale of the savings that this Council has had to make to balance the budget. It is simply not possible for the Council to continue unimpacted by these reductions. However, we firmly believe that by targeting the savings away from the most important services, the impacts experienced by councillors and residents will be minimised as far as possible.

The next stage of the process will be for Stronger Council to consider the proposals in January, and I encourage all members to take a keen interest in the proposals.

Audit

The long, drawn-out, Audit of the Accounts for 2020/21 is heading to a close with no significant concerns having been raised by our Auditors as yet. A national technical issue is now delaying final sign-off so the Auditors have commenced work on the Audit for 2021/22 whilst they wait for the issue to be resolved. As all of the Finance Team's resources are now focused on pulling together the Budget for 2023/24, there is little prospect of the 2020/21 now being signed off before January. It is, however, hoped that the sign-off of 2020/21 will be swiftly followed by sign-off of 2021/22 and that we will be back on track for the closure and sign-off of 2022/23.

Together with the Chair of Audit and Governance Committee, (Cllr Bolton), I will continue to keep members updated on close of Accounts progress.

I can also report that the Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) body has now completed the procurement of Audit contracts commencing from 2023/24 and Ernst and Young has been successful in winning the contract for Epping Forest District.

Qualis

The financial performance of Qualis continues to be regularly reported to the Cabinet and Stronger Council. The provisional results from the fourth quarter (year-end) of their 3rd year of trading have been received, but we await the imminent conclusion of their Audit process before reporting these to Council. The Audited accounts will be presented to Stronger Council in January and then to Cabinet.

The same financial conditions that are so heavily impacting on the Council are also having enormous implications for Qualis. These were drawn out in the single year Qualis Business Plan that was recently presented to both Overview and Scrutiny and to Cabinet.

Despite the extremely difficult conditions it is expected that Qualis will have managed to significantly reduce its trading losses in its third year of trading, ended on the 30th September 2022. However, they still likely to be short of target.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Finance
Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Philip

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance Portfolio Holder be noted.

Epping Forest Shopping Park

I am pleased to report that the shopping park continues to be extremely busy.

The difficulties in accessing and egressing the carpark are known to the Council so I am pleased to report that we are investigating the feasibility of reconfiguring it so as to make access and egress easier for our customers.

A contractor has been appointed and visited the site. They will be putting forward their suggestion shortly.

Brooker Road Industrial Estate Waltham Abbey

I am pleased to report that the legal and property due diligence has been completed in respect of 181 . The sale contracts are ready for completion.

Cartersfield Road, Waltham Abbey redevelopment

Unit 10 and 10a has recently suffered a traveller incursion with circa 50 tons of fly tipping being dumped. The site was however quickly back under control and the rubbish cleared.

North Weald Airfield

The HMRC Inland Border Facility is almost clear of its infrastructure with re-instatement works will be starting imminently.

The Airfield hosted a very successful Ongar and Hoddesdon Round Tables fireworks event on Saturday 5th November that attracted 5000 visitors and some excellent feedback.

The Essex Carp Show is returning to the Airfield in January 2023 following its success in 2022.

The regular Airfield Sunday morning car meet held on Remembrance Sunday raised a fantastic £4650 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Housing and Community Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Whitbread

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing and Community Portfolio Holder be noted.

Welcome Pam Wharfe Interim Housing Director

Pam Wharfe joined us on 7 November 22 as the Interim Housing Director. Pam's remit includes Housing Strategy and Housing Needs (following Jennifer Gould's successful appointment to Interim Strategic Director) and Housing and Property Services (following Deborah Fenton's farewell to accept a new position).

This is an extremely busy time for Housing as we continue to prepare for the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill. The bill is anticipated to receive royal assent at the end of this parliamentary session which means it is an ideal time to welcome Pam and the experience she brings with her.

Housing News Autumn Edition

The latest edition of the six-monthly newsletter for Council tenants has been published online along with a supplementary booklet on help during the cost-of-living crisis. Paper copies of the newsletter have been sent to those tenants on our register who require a more accessible format. Hard copies are also available in the Members room.

Homelessness prevention and relief

A total of 99 applications for assistance with homelessness prevention or relief were received during October 2022 and the demand is expected to increase over the winter months.

We have appointed a Homelessness Triage and Support Officer and a Homelessness Officer following a recent recruitment campaign.

The team successfully arranged for five households to access suitable homes in the private rented sector during this reporting period. A notable achievement given the rapid decline in affordable private rented accommodation that is available locally and nationally.

Norway House temporary accommodation Christmas fun festivities and donations

Staff are preparing to host a Christmas party for all residents on 15 December which will include plenty of party food, a DJ, a children's entertainer and even a visit from Santa.

All children will receive a Christmas present, thanks to the kind donations from the Upper Clacton Rugby Club who provide for us every year. We have also been donated a Christmas Food Parcel for each family, from Epping Food Bank. The team has relayed how moving it

is to receive so many donations, particularly as the generosity comes at a time when so many people face challenges with the cost-of-living crisis.

Supporting survivors of domestic abuse

Our Domestic Abuse Support Specialist is busy working with residents who are experiencing domestic abuse; to ensure they have the support they require, are engaging with relevant services and charities and feel empowered and confident to take the next steps in their journeys.

We are preparing for the '16 Days of Action' campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse and are planning a number of events with partners.

The allocation of social housing in 2021-22 and applicants on the Housing register

The Annual Lettings Report, published on 28 November 2022 reports that 404 properties were allocated to applicants in housing need between 2021-22, slightly lower than the 413 allocations in 2020-21. In total, 30 properties sold under the Right to Buy more than double the 14 sold the previous year. There were 1,308 households on the waiting list as of 31 March 2022 compared to 1,355 as of 31 March 2021. The annual reports are available on the Housing pages of the EFDC website.

Building more energy efficient homes

The Development team is in discussion with Homes England for funding to build 8 flats to passivhaus standards which will provide maximum energy efficiency. The team is optimistic about receiving funding and is aiming to enter into contract in early 2023. Planning applications are also being prepared to redevelop more garage sites for affordable housing.

A mixed tenure development with a registered provider is due for completion in January 2023. The scheme will deliver an additional 18 homes for affordable rent or shared ownership. These are currently being advertised to identify qualifying applicants.

The Portfolio holder and officers are considering the Council's future Development Strategy in light of the current economic climate. Initial discussions will be followed by a formal review, detailed proposals, consultation in the new year.

Continuation of Sheltered Housing Refurbishments

Following the successful refurbishment of Frank Bretton House, the sheltered housing scheme in Ongar, approval has been given to continue this work undertaking one or two refurbishments a year until all schemes are complete. Work will commence at Hyde Mead House, Nazeing in the New Year.

New "Needs Led" Support Model for residents in sheltered housing

We are planning to change the way we deliver support to residents in sheltered housing. We have drafted a new model of support that replaces the outdated daily welfare checks with a more flexible needs led service. The intention is to provide peace of mind that support is available if and when it is needed. This approach will allow us to spend more quality time with those residents who need support.

Re-branding "sheltered housing" as "Independent Living"

As part of the modernisation of our housing services for older people we are replacing the term "Sheltered Housing" with "Independent Living" and staff titles have changed to "Independent Living Officers."

New ways of working for Caretakers

From 1 December Caretakers will work in teams of three over a wider geographical area, so they can rotate and provide cover when necessary. Their new vans will be equipped with

hot water to improve cleaning and a smart tablet to report issues like fly-tipping straight away when out and about.

Improving the management of damp and mould growth

More tenants have been reporting damp and mould following news of the tragic death of a toddler in Rochdale. We had anticipated a increasing problem this winter due to fuel costs and have put the following measures in place:

- Methodical diagnosis incorporating Housing Ombudsman (H.O.) guidance not to jump to 'lifestyle excuses'
- Dedicated surveyors to oversee all repair referrals and damp surveys
- A damp and health training course with one of the Country's leading authorities
- A new damp factsheet for tenants and an article in Housing News that follow the principles laid out by the H.O.
- A new Damp Repair Tracker with Qualis that EFDC surveyors have access to
- Additional training for surveyors in December in building ventilation
- Encouraging reasonable building and insulation improvements

Consultation on the proposed transfer of Grounds Maintenance to Qualis

The formal consultation period for Council tenants and leaseholders runs from 21 November-21 December 2022. Methods of consultation include; electronic and paper flyers, a survey and on-line question and answer sessions for people living in sheltered housing, general needs housing and members of the tenant and leaseholder panel.

Residents have been informed that all responses received during the consultation period will be considered before a formal decision is made on the proposed transfer of grounds maintenance service to Qualis Group Ltd.

Income Recovery has a new manager and rent arrears are reducing

Romana Lawson has been with EFDC and managing the Income Recovery team since 7 November 22. Arrears have reduced by 0.3% from October 22. More flexible ways to pay rent are being introduced including Direct Debit and the option to make weekly, fortnightly, and monthly payments.

Housing closure orders for drug crimes

The Tenancy Management team secured two property closure orders for 'cuckooing.' Working with the Safer Communities team they disrupted criminals responsible for taking over the homes of vulnerable people to establish a base for illegal drug dealing. The Tenancy Management team supported and rehoused the victims of the cuckooing.

Single point of contact for anti-social behaviour and tenancy management

Tenants and leaseholders have a single point of contact for both anti-social behaviour and tenancy management issues. This provides greater capacity for office-based staff to answer telephone enquiries, thereby improving customer care. The decision follows a trial period separating tenancy management and anti-social behaviour services which was not considered to be as efficient.

Safer streets and courts in Ninefields

Estates and Land Management and Community Culture and Wellbeing have jointly identified 25 residents living in courts and blocks in Ninefields who want to be court champions. These local volunteers become the eyes and ears of the estate. They are committed to working with the Council to sense check initiatives for the benefit of the local community, including but not limited to safer streets funded proposals.

Refreshing our Resident Involvement Strategy for Council owned social housing

Following a successful Member Workshop in November we are about to consult residents on the final draft Resident Involvement Strategy. This will help to ensure we have effective mechanisms in place to listen and respond to residents' views when delivering landlord services, a key requirement of the new pro-active regulatory framework for social housing.

The Housing Strategy for 2023-2027

The proposed Housing strategy for 2023-2027 is being presented to Cabinet on 12 December for approval. It includes five strategic cross cutting housing priorities, the golden thread to the corporate plan and delegated authority for the Portfolio holder to agree and review the partnership delivery plan on an annual basis.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Wellbeing and Community Partnerships Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor

Recommending:

That the report of the Wellbeing and Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder be noted.

Short Breaks in West Essex – Activity Programme for Children with Disabilities

Following the ongoing success of the Epping Forest Inclusion Project, a bid to the value of £152,480 has been submitted to Essex County Council to upscale delivery of Short Breaks activities across West Essex for children aged 0-14 years with Learning Disabilities, Autism, and Physical Impairments. Should the bid be successful, the team will work with Uttlesford and Harlow Councils to oversee provision in their respective districts.

ActivAte – Free meals and activities for SEND young people

The Inclusion Project is a SEND Hub for ActivAte in the district. £516 was secured from Essex County Council to offer free activities and a meal for young people with SEND needs who are eligible for benefits based free school meals, and 'low income' working families during October Half Term. Three sessions ran at The Box in Epping, catering for 24 children. An additional 21 subsidised spaces were also made available to bolster the offer. Funding has been secured to run ActivAte during the Christmas Holidays and February Half Term.

Creativity & Sports Awards and Young Citizen of the Year

Applications for the Creativity and Sports Awards 2023 closed on 11th December and those for the Young Citizen of the Year 2023 closed on 25th November. Some fantastic nominations have been received and winners will be announced at the Civic Awards event in the New Year.

RideLondon

It has been confirmed that the RideLondon 2023 Essex100 mass participation ride will take place on Sunday 28 May 2023, and that the route will be the same as it was in 2022. The Classique women's tour event will not take place in the Epping Forest district for 2023.

Community Engagement events were hosted by London Marathon Events (the RideLondon organisers) and Active Essex, during the week commencing 31 October in Ongar, Epping, and Buckhurst Hill. The proposed route was displayed, and members of

the community were invited to attend and share any concerns or queries. An average of 20 people attended each consultation event, with feedback mainly relating to the need for clearer and timely community access plans. A further community consultation event is due to take place in North Weald.

Feedback from these events was presented to Members of Essex County Council on Monday 14 November 2022, where the proposed route was agreed. It is expected that the route will be officially announced during the week commencing 12 December 2022. Details of road closures will follow, along with information about further community engagement plans. London Marathon Events visited Epping and Ongar High Street at the end of November to engage with local businesses.

Active Essex have spoken to SweetSpot Group, the organising body of the Tour of Britain and Women's Tour Road Cycling races, to ensure that there will be no other organised races traversing through the district within close proximity to the RideLondon date.

The Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team will be organising pre-event activities such as; "learn to ride", Bikeability (cycling proficiency) courses, and inclusive cycling sessions. The team will be fully engaged with the County Activation Working Group to ensure the district secures all available wider resources.

Crucial Crew

Crucial Crew 2022 took place in October, reaching more than 900 Year 6 pupils from 21 primary schools across the district. Partnering with a number of other councils across Essex, EFDC commissioned theatre production company Hyperfusion (TickTok productions) to deliver a bespoke film and workshop, focussing on child exploitation, grooming and gang crime. School pupils watched a short film called 'Lines', and this was followed by an interactive online workshop. The aim was to educate young people on the warning signs of an exploitative relationship and how to seek guidance and support. Funding totally £10K has been secured from the Integrated Care Partnership towards bringing Crucial Crew back to a 'face to face' model from 2023, with multiple partners delivering workshops. Consultation with schools is currently being undertaken.

Ninefields Health & Wellbeing Community Project & Safer Streets Project

Since April 2022 funding totalling £500K has been secured for the Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey. In total, 18 new projects and interventions have been initiated involving over 500 residents. The Council's Community & Culture Team have successfully recruited local volunteer "Court and Road Champions" to assist with project consultation and roll out.

The topic of healthy relationships is being addressed in the four primary schools surrounding Ninefields and an initiative called 'Broadcast Junior' is being offered to Year 5 and 6 pupils with an interactive workshop tackling issues such as consent, social media, the law and consequences. The Ninefields Youth Club has been increased to two sessions per week. Local young people recently took part in a culture, diversity and equality workshop.

Stay Well and Safe This Winter – Interactive Event for Older Residents

The Community & Culture Team organised a 'Stay Safe and Well this Winter' multi-agency event at Waltham Abbey Town Hall on 3rd November with over 70 attendees and 20 partner organisations from across the public sector. 40 Covid vaccinations were administered, and 10 Health Checks undertaken. Informative talks were given by 6

organisations and Arc Theatre delivered a performance themed around scamming. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service received 11 referrals for residents to have smoke alarms fitted in their properties.

Community Champions

Proactive Limes Farm Community Champions have secured funding from the Grange Farm Trust and Community Safety Partnership in support of the Limes Farm Colts Football Scheme.

The Council's Community Engagement officers support 24 local volunteer Community Champions district-wide to roll out innovative community-based activities. Community Champions are all Mental Health First Aiders and have undertaken Dementia Friends Awareness Training.

Warm Places

The Community, Culture & Wellbeing team has mobilised a district-wide offer of Warm Places this winter. On 24th October a Warm Place opened in the Civic Offices. In partnership with volunteers identified by VAEF, the Council's Warm Place is open on a Mon and Tues between 10am and 4pm and is sited within the existing Community Hub. Free hot drinks, comfortable seating, WiFi access, board games and a very warm welcome await visitors. A range of partners agencies, along with Council Officers, are on hand to offer support, guidance and signposting to wider services if needed. Friendly volunteers are on site to visitors throughout the day.

Additionally, local Town and Parishes, community groups and churches have been contacted in order that the Council can encourage and support as many wider organisations as possible to come on board and offer up their buildings as Epping Forest Warm Places. By way of an incentive, CCW are providing funding of £200 per Warm Place via the EF Public Health Community Grant to enable free hot drinks to be available and fund any resources needed to make the spaces comfortable and welcoming. The Council's commitment is to provide a central list of all of the Warm Places and promote these via the Council website, as well as encouraging wider partners to do the same. Warm Places are available in Loughton, Waltham Abbey, Ongar, Abridge, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill and North Weald. It's anticipated this offer will continue to grow.

Epping Forest Youth Council - 'Repair My Pocket' Project

The Youth Council's current project focuses on cost-of-living challenges. Youth Councillors designed a 12-question survey and conducted street interviews at a recent joint Council & Essex Police community "day of action". The survey is now available to all schools to complete. The aim is to assess how local young people are being affected by financial pressures and to get a better understanding of how services can help them.

Youth Councillors received £1k from the Jack Petchey Foundation to help educate young people about scammers. They have purchased 800 'The Little Book of Scams' booklet to support the cost-of-living project.

Four Youth Councillors attended the ECVYS Youth Voice conference at Anglia Ruskin University on 22nd October. They contributed to workshops addressing mental health and wellbeing, LGBTQ+, hate crime awareness, mapping safety, staying safe in public and on transport and healthy relationships.

Epping Forest District Museum

September saw the opening of the Animal Mummies exhibition at the Museum. The exhibition had over 2000 visitors with many school bookings for this core curriculum topic.

Other exhibitions taking place at the Museum over the coming months include a display on Homelessness which will open in January. This exhibition will include the lived experiences of individuals and an art installation created by participants and highlight some historical stories of homelessness in and around the district.

The Museum recently put on a display for Black History Month about Peter Henry Abrahams Deras, a South African writer and journalist who lived in Debden. The Museum continued its work with local faith leaders with an online and in person display of the life of faith groups in the district as part of Inter Faith Week which took place in November.

The Museum received £3K from SHARE Museums East to support marketing and £10K from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Furthermore, the Museum has been successful in receiving the first part of the National Lottery Heritage Grant to inject over £500,000 into Waltham Abbey through a project to restore monuments in the Abbey Gardens, develop new signage and interpretation, a guiding scheme, art installation, education resource and exhibition to support tourism.

On the 8 November the Museum hosted the Essex Faith Covenant's annual event, bringing together faith leaders and public service providers to network, learn and develop partnerships. The Museum was chosen to host the event due to the work it undertakes to involve faith communities.

On 18 November the Museum took part in "Kids in Museums Takeover Day" for the 9th year running. This event saw King Harold Secondary School students take over the running of the Museum and organise activities for pupils from Hill House Primary School.

The Museum has been awarded the Hidden Gem status in Visit England's 2021-2022 Visitor Attraction Accolades scoring an overall 90%, with 100% in cleanliness, customer care and staff knowledge. The Museum was described as 'A fine example of a small museum with a varied and intriguing range of content drawn from the local area, supplemented by a calendar of considered, relevant temporary exhibitions.'

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Customer Services
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Lion

Recommending:

That the report of the Customer Portfolio Holder be noted.

Customer Strategy 2022/23 Update

1 Work is progressing on **improving the website** to make it easier for customers to find information and complete transactions. A small group of customers attended a face-to-face consultation in November to give initial feedback on the work to improve the search function plus look and feel of the pages. Work will continue to improve the overall look and feel plus simplification of online forms and the team will continue to consult with customers at each stage.

2 Residents who **pay with cash** at the Broadway office have now received an Allpay card along with details of how they can conveniently pay their bills at Post Offices throughout the district. They have all been provided with the customer contact centre details should they require support. Closure of the Broadway office on 29th November has been explained to customers on the website and social media as well as signage in the Broadway office.

3 Work is now commencing to develop the **Members Portal**. This will provide Members with a one stop shop for access to all information and systems needed as well as single password sign on. This is a very positive step in supporting Members on their digital journey.

Customer Service

4 To address the issue of **Officer phones not being answered** in a timely manner, all Team Managers will be completing a 'fix the basics' customer service health check. At the next wider leadership event in December Managers will sign up to three actions to improve customer service, these will include a commitment to return phone calls in a timely manner, up to date voicemail messages and all outgoing communications to advise of response times to manage expectations.

5 A key challenge has been a lack of analytics to understand; why customers call, what the barriers are to using digital methods, as well as visibility on customer service standards when the contact centre has to transfer calls to back office technical teams. A **data capture form** is to be introduced which will collect this information.

The form will enable the Customer Service team to identify trends on reasons for calls, allocate call back requests, monitor and track responses within Service Level Agreements

(SLA) as well as providing performance reports. If calls are not returned an automated escalation will be sent to the Team Manager. All Managers will have access to the reports to address any areas of concern. The intention is to implement this as soon as possible and launch to all Managers in December.

6 Following an initial discussion, regular meetings with **Town & Parish Council** clerks are to be set up to help improve two-way communication. The Customer Service Manager and Contact Centre Manager will be attending the Local Councils Liaison Committee meeting on 29th November to answer questions raised and agree the most effective communication channels.

7 **Digital skills coaching** started 31st October every Monday from 9-10.30am at Limes Centre Chigwell. This will be working with the Limes Farm Residents Association Group to bolt on to the existing Community Café. Sessions will run for six weeks with a review of demand in December.

8 The next **Members Coffee Morning** was held during October and well attended. The customer service team gave a presentation on **the most effective ways to contact the Council**. The presentation is available at the link below.
<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Quickest-and-easiest-ways-of-contacting-EFDC-Members-Coffee-Morning-Presentation.pdf>

9 Members will be aware of the ongoing issues with the current **Waste and Recycling** contract and the number of missed collections. The Customer Service team continue to work closely with our waste team to provide up to date information to residents via the website.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Contracts and Commissioning
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Avey

Recommending:

The report of the Contracts and Commissioning Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management

Waste Management Contract

Officers have begun work to start the procurement process for the Waste / Street Cleansing Contract which expires in November 2024. Market engagement events have been held with potential waste contractors.

Officers continue to monitor the performance of Biffa and work in a positive manner to improve service delivery and ensure the issue of missed collections is resolved and kept under control.

Recycling Pilot

Epping Forest District Council and Biffa are running a pilot scheme using wheeled bins for recycling in selected roads in Theydon Bois and are looking for residents to volunteer to have a blue lidded recycling bin. All recycling can be placed loose in the bin so no need to use the clear recycling sacks or to collect them from outlets. Glass can also be placed in the blue lidded bin instead of the current blue box.

A bin hanger with further details how residents can get involved in the pilot have been delivered to properties in Theydon Bois. A leaflet will also be delivered to residents that are part of the pilot explaining what can and cannot be recycled and provide details of a questionnaire for residents to complete and provide their feedback.

Leisure Management

Contract Performance

Swimming membership has recovered quickly after the pandemic, with all sites showing growth from September 2021. Waltham Abbey leisure centre and Ongar leisure centre swimming memberships have exceeded pre-pandemic levels. Fitness membership numbers are still below pre-pandemic levels, but significantly above comparative data after the pandemic.

Real Living Wage

Staff shortages is a concern and a national problem in the leisure industry. Swimming lessons have been impacted by the difficulty in the recruitment of swimming instructors. Places Leisure are a Real Living Wage employer since 1st October 2022 and every member of staff working in the leisure centres will earn a real living wage. This is expected to assist with staff retention and provides great reputational benefits. This will also give an opportunity to encourage and build relationships with schools/colleges and provide apprenticeships.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Technical Services Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ken Williamson

Recommending:

That the report of the Portfolio Holder be noted.

Regulatory & Technical Services:

Anti-Social Behaviour

The ASB and Police teams have recently launched the 'Crimestopper Zones' initiative in Chigwell, on the Limes Estate, and Ninefields in Waltham Abbey, the first Council to do so in the county, and we have already received positive feedback from residents. The new initiative by the national charity Crimestoppers is aimed at building confidence in local communities about reporting crimes and to deterring criminals from committing offences. Many people feel reluctant to report crimes to the police or local authorities, but Crimestoppers provides anonymity to those providing information.

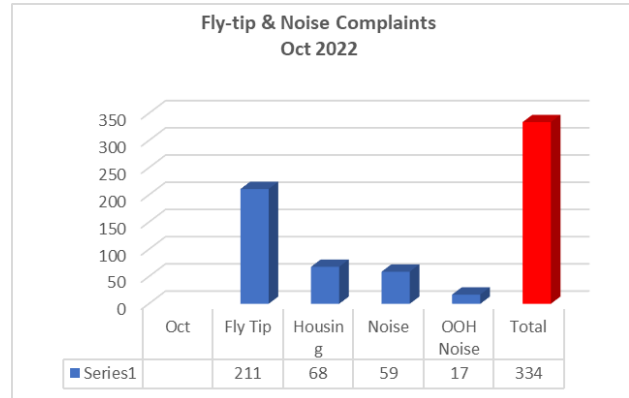
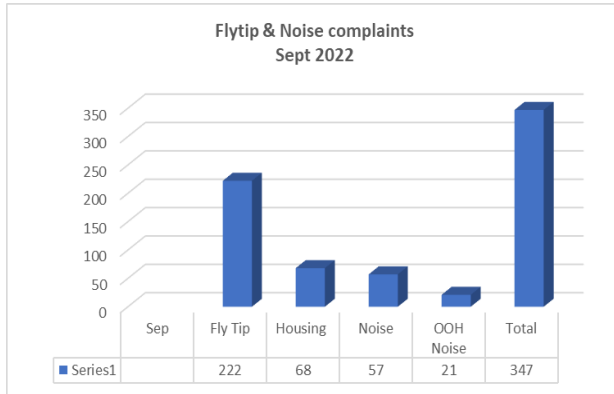
EFDC Policing Team

Epping Market on a Monday proactive patrols continue, the team have been deploying overt and covert tactics still. There was a recent report in one of the charity shops so the high visibility patrols will continue at present, the team will also cover the Christmas market.

Regular patrols are also taking place at Elgar Close, Buckhurst Hill and Vicarage Lane North Weald following reports of persistent ASB and drug possession/supply.

Enviro Enforcement

- 7 Fixed Penalty Notices issued
- 3 Community Protection Warnings issued
- 2 Community Protection Notice issued
- 1 Environmental Protection Act 1990 S.80 Notice served
- 2 Environmental Protection Act 1990 S.108 issued
- 52 visits made to businesses for Environmental Protection Act 1990 S.34 Waste Duty of Care and notices issued as necessary.



Environmental Protection and Drainage Team

The recent heavy rainfall events have meant the team have been busy attending some properties affected by flooding and monitoring our own Flood Storage Areas to ensure they do not overtop.

The Private Water Supply Charging Regime has now moved from the introductory rate of 50% of sampling costs to full cost recovery as it enters the second year. A new charging scheme for Environmental Information Regulation requests for property and contaminated land searches was implemented at the start of June and has been used successfully since then.

Highway Rangers

The rangers continue to work on reported issues from both Essex County Council and those reported by Members and residents. Recent jobs completed include installing several new finger posts, hedge cutting and pavement clearances, offensive graffiti removal, installing new benches at Bobbingworth Nature Reserve and the installation of renovated built-in bench seats in Epping High Street.

A new railing has been installed at the southern end of St Johns Road in Epping as the current metal posts and rails have rusted away.

Grounds Maintenance

The unseasonably warm weather has meant that grass cutting is continuing across the district as ground conditions allow. The mowing operations will shortly cease and teams will move onto their winter works programme.

The nursery team have completed the replanting of the seasonal bedding displays located throughout the district. The winter flowering pansies, forget-me-nots and spring flowering bulbs will bring a welcome splash of colour to our towns and villages over the coming months.

Tree Team

The team have now completed its phased removal of Oak Processionary moth within the district and have moved on to the planting programme for street trees, as well as the replacement of some of the planting that did not survive the summer drought.

Fleet

The new electric fleet of vehicles are now in service, which has resulted in a large reduction in repairs to the older diesel fleet of vehicles.

The team will be offering a free winter vehicle check to staff/councillors/stakeholders in pre booked slots across December.

Countrycare

Twelve sites have been visited amounting to 134 volunteer days a saving of approx. £7000 to the Council. Fungi finds were good this autumn, in one visit to Church Lane LNR and Thornwood Common LNR Parrot Waxcap, Witch's Hat, Snowy Waxcap and Shaggy Inkcap were all found.

A new pond is planned for Epping Green Millennium Garden, this will be dug by staff and volunteers over two days and a fence will be erected. This will add to the biodiversity of the site that presently has no water bodies.

October saw site furniture checks on all sites for health and safety and a programme of maintenance is planned. In September Countrycare ran a bat walk in partnership with the Essex Wildlife Trust on the Roding Valley Meadows, the event was well attended and three species of bat were observed. More events are being planned to run in partnership with EWT next year.

Building Control:

Income and budgets

Income through fees and charges by the end of October (Month 7) was at approximately £315,000 – remaining on track for the full year budget of £540,000. Performance was strong and consistent through April to July but was typically quiet through the August holiday period.

New projects starting on site in September were much reduced compared with previous years, however there has been some recovery through October and November. The national economic picture with high inflation on building materials and high business and home energy costs, together with recent upgrades to expected building performance through changes to the Building Regulations are expected to reduce demand over the winter.

The cost of delivering the Building Control Service is currently tracking marginally below our budgeted expectation. (Full year budget £732,000 – current forecast of £717,000).

Recent market share analysis by volumes of applications show a continuing increase in Approved Inspector's Initial Notices. The balance has tipped from a small majority of applications being submitted to the Council rather than Approved Inspectors in 2019/20, down to 48% in 2020/21 and 42% in 2021/22. We will continue to closely monitor, accepting that the means of measurement by application volumes does not necessarily equate to a realistic picture of the market share.

Cases requiring enforcement when referred to the Council by Private Approved Inspectors remain to be on the increase. This work is often resource intensive – Approved Inspectors are frequently reverting cases to the Council with very limited supporting information or case notes as a way of offloading the risk from their own licencing audits.

Legislative Change

The Health and Safety Executive wrote to all Section 151 Officers in October requesting the authorities position on charging hourly rates for the supply of staff to support the Building Safety Regulator. The Government expect Local Authorities to supply suitably qualified and competent Building Inspectors to support the Building Safety Regulator deliver Building

Regulations supervision and enforcement to all in scope buildings (typically high-risk and complex buildings).

Supporting the existing establishment of Surveyors with their own professional development to prepare for regular competency validations and licencing remains the priority for the service. There is a high risk that many of those employed in the sector will leave the industry before April 2024 resulting in a serious staffing deficit across both public and private sector Building Control.

Service Improvements

Building Control have undertaken an internal audit and are expecting external audit by either LABC or Alcumus Isocar prior to April 2023. I am pleased to report overall improvement on our 2021 audit in key areas such as Key Performance Indicator reporting, public protection and efficiency with statutory obligations.

Planning - Development Management

SAC Backlog

The Service continues to make good progress in releasing planning decisions delayed due to environmental legislation and caselaw relating to the Habitats Regulations and the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC). As of 23 November 2022 we have issued **202** decisions, delivering 328 dwellings. 24 Applications have been withdrawn and 29 applications have been refused. A number of applications (13) are awaiting the completion of S106 agreements and issuing of these decisions are imminent, resulting in permission for a further 21 dwellings.

Service Improvements

We recently published a new publicly searchable interactive planning mapping solution on the EFDC website.

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-building/interactive-planning-map/>

The map allows members of the public to see the most common planning and other constraints for properties within the district, such as Conservation Areas, Listed buildings, flood zones and Tree Protection Orders. Past and present planning application reference numbers are also shown. The publication of this information means a telephone call to the Council to check on the constraints will no longer be necessary.

Planning Enforcement

On 17 November 2022 the Council issued a Temporary Stop Notice relating to land at Tile Hill Farm, Pynest Green Lane in High Beech, requiring the cessation of unauthorised engineering works to create hard standings, moving earth, bringing aggregate onto the land and bringing of motor vehicles onto the land. The expediency of further enforcement action is currently under consideration.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Internal Resource Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sam Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder be noted

People Team

People Strategy 2020 – 2022

Engagement and Wellbeing project

- The results of our recent ‘Creating our Tomorrow – our ways of working for the future and beyond’ survey have now been shared with all employees and featured in the recent employee briefing on 20th October 2022. A video has been produced and is available on the intranet for all employees to refer to - for information regarding the results of the survey. We continue to encourage our managers to engage with their team members about the hybrid approach, whilst checking in on employee’s wellbeing and understanding the benefits of employees having flexibility in their roles.

Upgraded employee intranet

- Work is progressing on upgrading our existing employee intranet site. The existing site and the new will run alongside one another for a period of time whilst feedback is received, and tweaks are made to refine the site to a point where we are able to close down the outdated one.

On 10 October, 50 employees received access to the site to provide comments. So far, the feedback received has been positive and we have received lots of recommendations for refinements and tweaks which are being worked on behind the scenes.

The intranet site will be launched to the whole organisation in a test environment on 27 October and both intranet sites will run for a period of time whilst adjustments are being made from the feedback received.

Business Support

Local Land Charges (LLC), HMLR Project

- The Council’s data has passed all of HMLR’s checks through their artificial intelligence tools. Recently their Data Quality Team carried out a manual sample check of our data, where some additional records that require correction were discovered, so HMLR are manually working through those and making corrections on our behalf. This has left our

employees to focus on reducing the backlog of conveyancing searches and except for a couple of complex sites, the turnaround time is back at 10 working days.

- The Service Manager - Business Support continues to work with the Team Manager, our Continuous Improvement Officer, and our Change Manager to review what the remaining service will look like post migration.

Projects

Accommodation – Commercialisation of our bookable spaces

- The Council are partnering with IWG and Epping Regus for the advertising and booking management of our Conference Suite and Council Chamber at the Civic Offices. Epping Regus have engaged their Solicitor to go through a final review of the contract and we are hoping that both parties will sign shortly.

Soft Facilities Management – Outsourcing our Concierge Service

- Officers formally went out to tender to outsource the Civic Offices Concierge Service. Four companies showed an interest and attended the Civic Offices for a site visit, which led to one company making a bid for the contract. The bid went through an evaluation panel and the outcome was that it was a strong and tailored bid.
- A report is going to December Cabinet recommending the outsourcing of the service and the appointment of the successful provider. Prior to Cabinet, the report will go to Stronger Council in November for scrutiny.

Contingency Planning

- Officers are currently reviewing the Council's corporate Business Continuity Plan, ensuring there are plans in place if power is disrupted.

Democratic and Election Services

- A joint session with the Elections Team at Broxbourne Borough Council was held in November to consider the requirements of the Elections Act 2022. The main changes made by the Act for 2023 are;
 - i. Voters will have to show Photo ID at Polling Stations before a ballot paper can be issued.
 - ii. Electoral Registration Officers will have to issue free voter identification documents to those voters without a valid form of photo identification
 - iii. The handling of postal votes will be restricted:
 - This includes the number that can be handed in by any one individual
 - iv. Returning Officers must take reasonable steps to support those with a disability at polling stations
- Changes from 2024 include:
 - i. Postal Votes will now only last for a maximum of 3 years.
 - ii. Limits on the number of people a person may act as proxy for.
 - iii. The voting & candidacy arrangements for EU voters will change.
 - iv. All British Citizens living overseas will be able to register for UK Parliamentary elections, no matter how long ago they left the UK.
- The main benefits of the changes are to protect voters from electoral fraud and provide additional support for voters with disabilities at polling stations
- Members should be reassured that Officers are taking advice from a range of sources and working with other authorities to understand the requirements and how to implement them.

- Officers will provide updates for the Members Bulletin and they are considering a communication plan to provide the public, members and Town/Parish clerks of the changes as soon as is practicable.
- A Member Scrutiny Training Workshop took place on 13-Oct-22. This was well attended, well received, and will be repeated in future municipal years.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Internal Resources
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sam Kane

Recommending:

The report of the Internal Resources Portfolio Holder be noted.

Parking

Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers

The partnership with InstaVolt for EV chargers installed in Oakwood Hill East car park is going well. EV charging station usage levels are high and is helping EFDC with its climate change commitments. The provision of EV charging stations has also increased car park occupancy levels and is generating additional income to the Council.

EFDC are finalising the lease agreement with InstaVolt for 4 x rapid EV charging stations in Basons Lane car park, Ongar, which is expected to be installed in the new year. Further work is being done for charging stations in Cornmill car park, Waltham Abbey, and Burton Road car park, Debden. The installation of chargers will generate income to the Council through ground rent.

3PR Scheme

3PR is a school-led initiative offered across the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) to help prevent inconsiderate and dangerous parking around schools. The initiative engages and educates pupils with the use of incentives and other means to change and influence parking behaviours of parents/guardians.

EFDC have worked with NEPP (North Essex Parking Partnership) to support the 3PR initiative by providing a Park and Stride in the EFDC Traps Hill car park for Staples Road Primary School (Loughton). Below is a list of the schools in the Epping Forest District that NEPP have worked with, or are working with at present, for the 3PR initiative.

School Name	Package level	Consists of	Launch Date
Ivy Chimneys Primary School - Epping	Bronze	Base Educational package with signage resources outside	13th January 2019
Buckhurst Hill Community Primary School – Buckhurst Hill	Bronze	Base Educational package with signage resources outside	7th March 2022
Staples Road Primary School - Loughton	Silver	Base Education package with addition of a Park and Stride	5th September 2022
Oaklands School - Loughton	Silver	Base Education Package with Patrolled zone and token system outside the school	11th November 2022
Leverton Primary School – Waltham Abbey	Silver	Base Education Package with Patrolled zone and token system outside the school	7th November 2022
Chigwell Row Infant School - Chigwell	TBC	TBC	TBC

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027
Portfolio Holder: Leader of Council – Councillor C Whitbread

Recommending:

That the new Corporate Plan for the period 2023 – 2027 be agreed.

1 The Corporate Plan 2018 to 2023 is the authority's current key strategic planning document. The lifetime of the current Corporate Plan comes to an end 31st March 2023, a new Corporate Plan has been developed to take the authority forward over the period from 2023 to 2027.

2 The Council's main areas of focus for the four-year lifetime of the new Plan have been captured in a new set of corporate aims. In addition, a new set of key results have been developed to support the aims and key objectives. These Corporate aims will be reviewed annually through Objectives and Key Result measures to deliver and work towards the achievement of each objective that year.

3 The Corporate Plan is the Council's highest level strategic document. It sets the strategic direction for the authority for the lifetime of the plan, and as such informs all other plans produced by the Council. The Corporate Plan does not cover everything that the authority does, focusing instead on a number of key areas that it needs to focus on over the lifetime of the Plan. These include issues arising from the financial context within which the Council operates, things that matter most to our residents, and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental background of the district. Therefore, as a strategic document, the Corporate Plan does not contain specific information on the wide range of services that the authority provides, or how it delivers statutory duties or enforces legislation.

4 The Corporate Plan is an important element in the Council's performance management framework and corporate business planning processes. It provides a framework for the development of detailed annual directorate business plans and other detailed service plans which in turn provide details of service provision and how the work by services directly contributes to the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives. The Corporate Plan also provides the policy foundation for the authority's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and helps in the prioritization of resources to provide quality services and value for money.

5 The draft new Corporate Plan is attached at Appendix to this report.

6 The corporate aims, objectives and key results are a central element of the Corporate Plan and as such the new Corporate Plan has been developed around them in a focused and interrelated way. The new Plan is a forward looking and organised document, shorter than the existing Corporate Plan, and whilst directed internally, it is written in plain English and is easily understandable to members of the public.

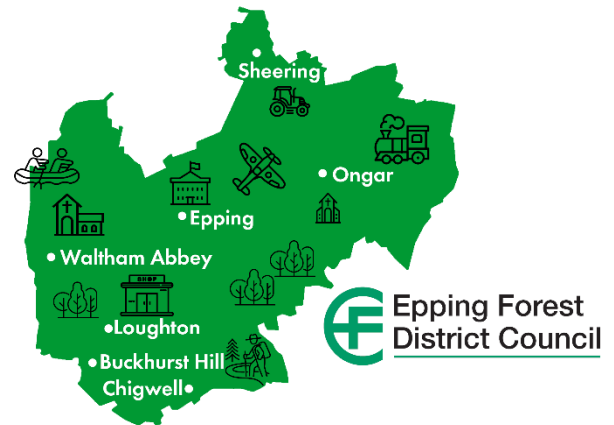
7 Like the existing Corporate Plan, and to minimise expenditure associated with the production of the new Plan, it will be primarily available via the Council's website. Should it be required in other formats assistance will be provided to facilitate access to the Plan.

Conclusion

6. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

Your Epping Forest

Our Plan 2023 – 2027



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1. Introduction – Our commitment to you

Councillor Chris Whitbread – Leader of Council

With its ancient forest, market towns and beautiful villages, Epping Forest is one of the most sought-after places in the UK. Close to London, linked by the Central Line and motorways, Epping Forest is the place to be for access to London and the southeast.

We have the forest and so much more. The royal history of Waltham Abbey stretches back over a thousand years. Chipping Ongar was the site of a medieval castle. Roman remains have been found in Chigwell. Loughton and Buckhurst Hill grew with the coming of the railways. Winston Churchill was our MP. Charles Dickens was inspired by our hospitality, and North Weald Airfield was our front-line in the Battle of Britain.

Steam trains run once again on the Epping and Ongar railway line. Families explore our industrial heritage at the Royal Gunpowder Mills. They walk, cycle, and relax beside the river Lee.

From the boutiques and cafes of Loughton and Buckhurst Hill to Epping Forest Shopping Park, and the markets of Epping and North Weald, we are a thriving commercial and retail destination.

Epping Forest is the place to raise your family and grow your business.

We are in demand, but the things that make our district special also bring challenges. The post-covid exodus from London has placed Epping Forest under pressure. As [Bloomberg News](#) reported, people are moving out of the city and Epping Forest is one of the most favoured destinations.

The war in Ukraine which has caused death and destruction to a proud nation by an aggressive invader, has also had a major impact on the global economy. The rise in the cost of living, interest rates and inflation is hitting everyone. Some much harder than others. The eventual length and depth of these challenges are unknown, but our future aspiration remain undiminished.

This Corporate Plan has been developed in the midst of those challenges.

Providing support, direction and guidance to the residents and businesses of our district is fundamental to what the Council does. We know we will have an important role in responding to the current crisis.

Despite this, there are some things that we know will always be important. These feature heavily in our plans. In our hearts is the strongly held belief that low taxation is best for our residents. It affords you the maximum choices over how you spend your income.

We will achieve this by continually striving to deliver an efficient, innovative, and well-run council that always puts the customer first. In doing so, we aim to ensure that the cost to deliver our services reduces whilst quality and value improves.

Employment and economic prosperity have always underpinned our district. Ensuring continued growth in jobs and creating career expanding opportunities are also central to our plans. By maximising the opportunities for existing employers, and at the same time attracting new and exciting investors and wealth creators to the district, we want to be seen as a place that is positively welcoming to businesses.

At its heart, our district is built from many distinct, strong, and diverse communities. These should be celebrated, nurtured, and supported so they are best able to help the people that live here. Working with community groups and partners, we aim to provide housing options and improved health outcomes that meet their needs. A sense of community and belonging is vital to a healthy and happy district. We will be there to help it grow.

The environment and the forest define much of the district. So, it is unsurprising that tackling the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change are a priority, feeding through into everything we do. Growth is inevitable, but we have an opportunity to harness the benefits and minimise the negative impacts on our district through our statutory and democratic roles.

For convenience and the ease of reporting, we have brought all our plans together under the three broad headings of Community, Place and Council but in reality, these are all inter-related.

As your local council, we are afforded a unique opportunity to oversee the wellbeing of the district and its residents. With this custodial role comes the responsibility of making sure that everything we do is for the benefit of our district and our residents. This plan sets out how we intend to do that over the next 4 years.

Councillor Chris Whitbread

Leader of Epping Forest District Council

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2. Our Values and Behaviours

Epping Forest District Council - A good neighbour to our residents, a good provider to our customers, a good employer to our people.

Why are we here?

Epping Forest is our place of work. It is where we grow up and where we grow old. It is our family and our community – it is the people we serve, and it is our home.

- To lead and support our community.
- To help our residents build better lives through
 - equality of opportunity by recognising and treating everyone as individuals,
 - tailoring our services to people's individual needs,
 - helping everyone achieve their maximum potential.
- For people to create happy and healthy places to live, work and play.
- To speak on behalf of our district.

What we do

We work for our district, the people and places that make Epping Forest special and unique.

- Bringing all our skills, expertise, and resources together for the benefit of our community.
- Delivering excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- Making Epping Forest a better place than it is now.

How will we do it?

Working together with the people we serve.

- We will listen.
- Target our resources where they are needed most.
- Make a positive impact on people's lives by
 - making every penny count,
 - striving to improve services,
 - and delivering value for money.
- Working with our partners to focus on health, wellbeing, housing, life-expectancy and equality.

These commitments are enshrined in our values and behaviours:

Trust - We will be open and honest with each other and our customers. We will treat everyone with respect and take responsibility for our actions.

Performance - We will take pride in our work and celebrate our achievements. We will learn from our mistakes and always do what we say we will do.

One Team - We will work together as One Council, supporting each other and our partners to achieve better results for everyone.

Customer - We will put our customers at the heart of everything we do, providing services that are tailored to the different needs of our communities.

Innovation - We will seek new ways of working to improve and change to meet new challenges.

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3. Our Key Objectives

Community, Place, Council

In an unpredictable environment, Epping Forest District Council must maintain agile services and flexible policies to respond swiftly to the changing needs of our community.

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Stronger Communities

We will safeguard vulnerable people. Our teams will support residents in need, providing support and equality of opportunity in a district that is safe for everyone.

- Consistent in our approach, we will strive to ensure all our residents can live in a safe and well-maintained environment.
- Break the cycle of domestic abuse by working in partnerships to reduce violence against women and girls.
- Use our place on the Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership with Essex Police, County Council, Fire and Rescue, and community groups, to deal with emerging local threats and issues.

We will work with our partners to achieve wellbeing and health equity for all our residents.

- We will adopt the Robert Wood Johnson Wider Determinants of Health Model as a framework through which to deliver multi-agency health and wellbeing improvement initiatives
- Focusing our partnerships, resources and capacity in key locations, we will address individual needs to reduce health inequalities across the district
- We will contribute to the delivery of the objectives detailed in the multi-agency Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026.

We will listen to our communities and work with them when making decisions, developing policies, and designing services.

- We will coordinate our consultation and engagement to ensure residents' views shape the services we provide.
- Strengthen and empower individuals and communities to help themselves.
- Invite families living in council housing to help us develop a resident involvement strategy, with a range of options to support involvement in our decision making.

*The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation works to build a culture of health in society.

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[Stronger Communities](#)

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Stronger Place

We will strive to reduce pollution and protect our environment, encouraging jobs, housing, and infrastructure that complements, rather than competes with the natural world.

- Investment and innovation to reduce energy consumption. Adopt cleaner forms of energy. Enable reduction of the council's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030.
- Reduce, reuse, and recycle more of the waste generated within local homes and businesses.
- **Encouraging residents, businesses and other organisations to reduce their own carbon emissions through the engagement actions set out in the Climate Change Action Plan**

We will improve existing spaces and create new places for people to live, play, gain skills and do business.

- Providing places for new businesses to start and opportunities for existing businesses to grow.
- Maximising economic investment, potential and growth through partnerships and commercial opportunities.
- Providing affordable homes within sustainable developments, served by transport, leisure, health, and other infrastructure to meet our residents' needs.
- Consultation and engagement with our residents in decisions affecting their place.

We will protect and enhance our green spaces for future generations while providing decent, safe homes to meet all our needs.

- Negotiate developer contributions towards green spaces and the environment as part of planning applications.
- Meet standards for good quality homes in sustainable locations enshrined within the Local Plan.
- Protect, maintain, and enhance the ecology, landscape, and heritage of our District.

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[Stronger Communities](#)

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Stronger Council

We will be a strong, well-managed, and efficient council in a post-pandemic world – adapting and responding to change in a district of opportunity.

- Maximising organisational capacity and capability:
 - Achieving our organisational goals through a high-performing, motivated workforce
 - Attracting, developing, and retaining great people
- Effective Leadership values and culture:
 - Developing people skills and behaviours to make EFDC an employer of choice
 - Developing our leadership to develop and inspire our people
- Employee experience:
 - Embracing change to support EFDC's cultural and digital evolution
 - Nurturing a culture of engagement and wellbeing

We will improve customer access to our services.

- Generating higher customer satisfaction through better accuracy and faster response.
- Making high-quality digital services the default choice for most residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Understanding and delivering better outcomes through data use, capture, and sharing according to our customers' needs.
- Providing digital solutions within a secure online environment, keeping us and our customers safe.

We will provide the highest standards of financial competence, management and governance.

- Ensuring value for money in the use of resources and delivery of services.
- Maintaining low Council Tax, embracing commercial opportunities, and achieving long-term financial sustainability.
- Optimising decision making and risk management through strong governance and best practice.
- Being accountable through transparent finance, governance and decision making.

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4. Delivering our plan

We deliver a huge range of services. We also work in partnerships for joined up services. Our list of partners is constantly growing and evolving.

Some of what we do

- Building Control
- Council Housing
- Private Sector Housing (landlords)
- Grants
- Waste and Recycling
- Planning applications, enforcement, and the Local Plan
- Leisure, Arts, Culture, Health, and Wellbeing
- Environmental Health
- Housing Benefits and Council Tax collection
- Community Safety
- Local Democracy and Elections
- Economic Development
- Commercial Property
- Carparks
- Grounds Maintenance (parks, verges, and public spaces)

Public Sector Partners

Central government plays an important role in the regulation of what we do. It also provides significant funding for local projects and services. Other significant partners include:

- Essex County Council
- Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, in association with
 - Essex Police Service
 - Essex Fire and Rescue
- National Health Services, in association with
 - The West Essex Integrated Care Board
- Town and Parish Councils
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Environment Agency
- Lea Valley Regional Park

- The Corporation of London
- Homes England
- The Innovation Corridor – linking London and Cambridge
- The DIZ – Digital Innovation Zone
- NEPP (North Essex Parking Partnership)

We represent the interests of our community further afield too. We talk with neighbouring London boroughs, the Mayor of London, Transport for London, and many other organisations outside our district.

Voluntary Sector Partners

The voluntary sector makes a vital contribution to our community. Local organisations are coordinated and supported by Voluntary Action Epping Forest. The development of council-supported community hubs combines the expertise of the council with other government organisations such as the DWP, and voluntary organisations such as Epping Forest Food Bank and Citizens Advice.

Commercial Partners

We work with commercial partners to deliver many of our services. Major contractors include:

- Qualis – a group of private companies created by and wholly-owned by the Council.
- Biffa – household waste and recycling.
- Places Leisure – leisure centres and swimming pools.

Qualis is one of our most significant innovations. As the sole 'share-holder' of Qualis, it gives Epping Forest District Council a competitive edge and access to private sector know-how.

Qualis is delivering major developments in Epping and Waltham Abbey. It is maintaining the Council's housing for more than 6,000 tenants and their families. Qualis is making commercial property investments to provide further long-term income returns to the Council. Money earned supports public services.

We also support services and keep Council Tax low through commercial partnerships at North Weald Airfield, Epping Forest Retail Park, industrial estates, and retail units. We have innovated beyond traditional income. The arrival of Regus (office lettings) on the top floor of the Civic Offices has created another income stream.

We will continue to develop income from assets such as North Weald Airfield (Masterplan), to support front-line services and keep Council Tax low.

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

Partnerships cross boundaries. Epping Forest District Council is working hard with other councils to meet the demand for new housing. 16,000 sustainable new homes are planned across Harlow and Gilston Garden Town by 2033, of which 3,900 are proposed in the Epping Forest council area.

HGGT comprises:

- Epping Forest District Council
- Harlow District Council
- East Herts District Council
- Essex County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council

People need more than houses. HGGT is building sustainable communities. Transport, employment, schools, and health services are all factored in. Infrastructure will include everything from water and electricity to broadband for environmentally friendly communities.

Advocate for our Community

Apart from Epping Forest District Council, many organisations provide local public services. For example

- Essex County Council
 - Highways
 - Social Services
 - Schools
- Utility Companies
 - Gas
 - Electricity
 - Water
 - Broadband
- Open Spaces
 - The Corporation of London – Epping Forest
 - Lee Valley Regional Park
- Public Transport
 - Transport for London buses and trains

We work to engage, influence, and encourage other organisations on behalf of our residents.

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5. Objective Key Results - OKRs

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An agile organisation must be flexible to changing circumstances. It must also have targets and results to measure its performance.

Objective Key Results (OKRs) are part of our monitoring and review. They provide objective benchmarks alongside the Scrutiny and Select Committees which oversee, challenge, and hold to account the performance of the Cabinet and the Council.

OKRs need to reflect an agile working environment and changing circumstances. As such, OKRs may evolve, or be replaced as changing circumstances dictate. OKRs will be monitored and reported through quarterly statistics and annual performance review reports to members and the council website ([link to OKR webpage to be inserted here](#)).

New and revised OKRs are introduced from April 2023.

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Report to the Council

Committee: Council

Subject: Consultation Response to Local Government Boundary Commission (England) Ward Boundary Review

Portfolio Holder: Leader

Date: December 2022

Recommending:

- (1) That the Council approves the consultation response as set out in Section 3 of this report for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission (England).**

Summary

- 1.1 Since September of last year, the Council has been the subject of an electoral review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The review is considering the size of the Council, in terms of the number of Councillors, and its ward boundaries. This is the first review of the Council by the LGBCE since 1998.
- 1.2 The LGBCE completed the first stage of its review back in May 2022 when it recommended that the District would be best represented by 54 Councillors in the future; a reduction of 4 Councillors in comparison to the current number. This was consistent with the Council's consultation response and discounted options including 45, 48, 51 and 57 Councillors.
- 1.3 The final stage of the process is for the LGBCE to agree a warding pattern across the district that fairly reflects the needs of the electorate. After considering representations from all interested individuals and parties it issued its draft recommendation on Warding Patterns for wider consultation on the 4 October 2022.
- 1.4 The deadline for responses to the consultation is 12 December 2022, but the LGBCE has granted an extension to allow the Council to consider their response this evening.
- 1.5 The Council's decision in December 2021 to retain elections in thirds meant that the LGBCE was required to design their warding proposals around an assumption of a uniform pattern of 3 member wards across the District, each being consistent with the 3 statutory tests laid down within legislation. These 3 tests being:
- Equality of representation.
 - Reflecting community interests and identities.
 - Providing for effective and convenient local government.
- 1.6 The Local Government Boundary Commission had made it clear in its briefings to the Council that if Epping Forest DC chose to remain electing by thirds, then this would lead to the District being predominantly made up of, larger, three member wards, as opposed to the current mixture of one, two and three member wards.

Although, it was understood that the Boundary Commission could deviate, in limited circumstances, from this arrangement if its proposals could not demonstrate that the 3 tests could be met.

- 1.7 The cross-party Portfolio Holder Advisory Group highlighted to the Boundary Commission that it considered that a uniform 3 member warding pattern across the entire district would not meet the 3 tests and exceptions would need to be made in parts of the district's to reflect disparate and discreet community identities.
- 1.8 It appears that the LGBCE's had rejected the Council's concerns and has recommended that the entire district be divided into 18 three-councillor wards. Their report states "we consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation".
- 1.9 In respect of the representations received by the Commission arguing that a uniform pattern of 3 member wards would not reflect the electoral needs of the district the Boundary Commission said.

"The two district-wide schemes [contained in the consultation responses received] provided a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for Epping Forest. We carefully considered the proposals received and noted that neither of these schemes provided a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation that it have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that a uniform pattern would undermine our statutory criteria. Having carefully considered the submissions provided, we are of the view that we have not received compelling evidence to move away from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards."

- 1.10 The Council, residents and other interested groups now have until the 12 December 2022 to comment upon these proposals before the Commission make their final recommendations on the 28 February 2023.

2 Consideration of the Warding Proposals by the PHAG

- 2.1 The cross-party Boundary Commission PHAG subsequently re-met on two occasions to consider the draft recommendations.
- 2.2 Members considered the views expressed around the warding arrangements for Roydon & Lower Nazeing, Rural East, Loughton Roding & Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge and Waltham Abbey North, Waltham Abbey South & Rural.
- 2.3 The main points considered by the PHAG are set out below.

Roydon and Nazeing

- 2.4 In relation to Roydon and Nazeing there was some support for the Roydon Parish Council's views that too many seats are proposed in the Parish Wards. However, it noted that this was a matter for the Parish Council to respond on. It was also noted that the projections of electorate for the Halls Green Ward were probably now too high due to the continuing delays in approving the Local Plan, meaning that anticipated developments would most likely not be fully built out by 2028.

Rural East

- 2.5 The PHAG felt strongly that the LGBCE has not met its own tests adequately with the proposals put forward because of the size of the area and disparate nature of the communities covered by it. The PHAG felt that the area should be represented by 3 single member wards, the detail of which is set out in the proposed consultation response set out in Section 3 below.

Loughton Roding & Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge

- 2.6 Councillor Murray and Councillor C. Pond were strongly of the view that Buckhurst Hill and Loughton were distinct communities and should be recognised as such within the Warding proposals as they were physically separated by a 'Green Walk', which had been created in 1940 following the Abercrombie principles. This demonstrated a clear boundary between the areas and had been upheld as a distinct boundary in the last review.
- 2.7 Councillor Murray presented evidence (Background Document) that demonstrated the various community links which clearly defined Buckhurst Hill and Whitebridge as separate areas.
- 2.8 However, several members of the group thought the Commission's proposals were acceptable considering the urban demographics of the area. Furthermore, that if the Council were to pursue this line, it could be argued that this principle could be used across the district for other wards, therefore increasing the number of members which was contrary to the recommendations to reduce members to 54.
- 2.9 On balance the PHAG did not support the case put forward on the grounds that this situation was not unique to the proposed Ward of Loughton Roding & Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge.

Waltham Abbey North, Waltham Abbey South & Rural

- 2.10 The PHAG considered a submission from Councillor S. Kane to remedy the ward splitting of the Ninefields community in Waltham Abbey by the inclusion of a number of roads into Waltham Abbey North. The PHAG noted that this would not only take the variance too high in Waltham Abbey North but also make Waltham Abbey South & Rural too low. Because of the consequential knock-on effect on other wards the PHAG did not support these proposals.
- 2.11 A proposed draft response to the Boundary Commission clearly setting out the Council's concerns is set out in the section below.
- 2.12 This report seeks Council's endorsement to these consultation comments set out below so that they may be submitted as the Council's agreed response to the consultation paper.

3 Consultation Response to LGBCE

- 3.1 That the PHAG supports all of the Commission's draft recommendations for the district wards with the strong exception of the Rural East ward.
- 3.2 That Council previously argued that the Rural East of the District would be too large geographically and with too many individual communities which share little or no

community identity for the Commission’s own tests to be met. The publication of the Consultation draft which dismissed the Council’s views and includes a proposed Rural East ward only serves to emphasise just how large and disparate this warding arrangement would be in practice. The ward would be more than 17 kilometres, north to south and 13 kilometres east to west, with elements of 21 individual communities captured within it, this is demonstrably too large and clearly contradicts the Commission’s criteria of Effective Local Government (as it is geographically too large) and Community Identity (as the communities largely do not associate with each other). To address these issues the Council strongly believes that this ward should be split into three single member wards as follows:

<i>Ward 1</i>	<i>Ward 2</i>	<i>Ward 3</i>
Lower Sheering Sheering	Bobbingworth High Laver East High Laver West Little Laver Moreton Magdalen Laver Matching (1) Matching (2)	Norton Mandeville Paslow Common Willingale AB& BR Fyfield
<i>variance 30% 2022 32% 2028</i>	<i>variance -2% 2022 -7% 2028</i>	<i>variance 14% 2022 7% 2028</i>

- 3.3 This would provide effective local government by creating smaller, more manageable geographical areas for the members. The proposed ward covers nine parish councils therefore splitting this ward into three wards would allow the member to develop connections and good contacts with those parishes, which would not as easily be created and maintained if it was a three-member ward.
- 3.4 Community identity revolves around the various parishes, primary schools and community buildings within each of these areas which strengthens the Council argument for retaining the three single member wards.
- 3.5 There is also a distinct difference between the Sheering and Lower Sheering wards which were more populated, urban in style and had clustered housing developments compared to the rest of the parishes, where the housing becoming much more sporadic towards the east of the proposed ward pattern.
- 3.6 The Council notes that the variance for the Lower Sheering and Sheering is above the tolerance but as the room for growth in this area is confined and because it is so different to the rest of the proposed ward, this should be overlooked for the sake of the community identify and effective local government.
- 3.7 If the Commission was not minded to support the above recommendation, the Council proposes that a single member ward and a two member ward would be preferred to the three member ward for the above reasons.
- 3.8 The proposed single- and two-member ward proposed would be as follows:

Ward 1 (single member ward)	Ward 2 (two-member ward)	
Lower Sheering Sheering	Bobbingworth High Laver West Moreton Matching (1) Norton Mandeville Willingale Fyfield	High Laver East Little Laver Magdalen Laver Matching (2) Palslow Common AB& BR
<i>variance 30% 2022 32% 2028</i>	<i>variance 6% 2022 0% 2028</i>	

3.9 It should also be noted that the Council supported Roydon Parish Council's comments, which argued that the number of Parish ward members required for Hall Green was too large. The developments predicted for this area are reliant on the Local Plan being adopted in good time and master planning for the site being produced to allow for the development to take place before 2028. With the delays in adopting the Local Plan it is now felt unlikely that this development area will be completely built out by the 2028 date.

4 Resource Implications

4.1 None this year or next.

5 Legal and Governance Implications

5.1 The submission does not propose any changes to the Council's existing governance arrangements but does recognise that, depending upon the conclusion reached by the LGBCE, a review of the democratic structures of the Council are likely to be required.

6 Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications

6.1 None.

7 Consultation Undertaken

7.1 None

Background Documents

Councillor Murray's information on the community differences between Buckhurst Hill and Whitebridge presented to the Local Government Boundary Review (Portfolio Holder Advisory Group) – 21 November 2022

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Report to the Council

Date: 13 December 2022

Report of: The Independent Remuneration Panel

Subject: Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24

RECOMMENDING:

Members' Allowances Scheme

Basic Allowance

(1) That, for the 2023/24 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 2024/25 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 2023/24 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 2023/24 municipal year, the implementation level of Special Responsibility Allowance applied to the responsibilities identified in the Members' Allowances Scheme be retained at their current level;

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 2023/24, attached at Appendix 2 to this report, be adopted and implemented with effect from 25 May 2023; 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.

Report:

1. The Remuneration Panel (the Panel) undertakes a review of Epping Forest District Council's Members' Allowances Scheme each year in order that any recommendations for revision to elements of the Scheme can be considered alongside the preparation of the Council's budget for the next financial year. This annual report of the Panel sets out the findings of our recent review of the Members' Allowances Scheme and our conclusions and recommendations regarding the application of members' allowances for the 2023/24 municipal year.

2. The Remuneration Panel was established in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. These regulations, which arose from the relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory independent Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice on members' allowances. All Councils are required to convene their Panel and seek its advice before making any changes or amendments to allowances schemes and must 'pay regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme.

3. The Panel is required to gather information, to hear and consider evidence and to make recommendations to the Council on:

- the amount of Basic Allowance to be paid to members;
- those positions that should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance and the level of such allowance; and
- travel, subsistence and certain other allowances.

4. The current members of the Remuneration Panel are Mrs. T. Finn, Mr. D. Jackman and Mr. S. Lye. This report will be presented to the Council by Stephen Lye on behalf of the Panel.

Members' Allowances Scheme

5. The last review of the Members' Allowances Scheme was undertaken by the Panel on 2 February 2022 and our recommendations regarding members' allowances for the 2022/23 municipal year were considered by the Council at its meeting on 24 February 2022. We have recently undertaken the annual review of the Scheme for 2023/24, in order that any proposals for changes to members' allowances can be considered by the Council as part of the budget-setting process for the next financial year.

6. As in previous years, we have been keen to understand the views of Councillors in connection with the operation of the scheme in practice and specific matters that Members would like the Panel to consider. As part of our current review, we requested the Team Manager for Democratic & Electoral Services to invite Councillors to raise issues or concerns about the current scheme that they wished us to consider. However, there were no representations received from Members.

Basic Allowance

7. All local authorities must make provision for a flat-rate allowance to be payable to all Members. This 'Basic Allowance' is payable equally to all Councillors and is designed to cover activities such as constituency casework, preparation for and attendance at meetings of the Council's committees and service as a representative of the authority on outside bodies for which no separate remuneration is made.

8. In considering the recommendations of the Panel in February 2022, the Council agreed that no change be made to the payment of the full amount of Basic Allowance of £4,300 per member per annum to be included in the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022/23. An increase in the implementation rate of the Basic Allowance was introduced from 2016/17 in line with the recommendations of the Panel over several years, that the authority should implement 100% of the amount of Basic Allowance for each member, rather than the level of 80% previously applied.

9. The Panel has undertaken a further comprehensive benchmarking exercise amongst twenty-five comparable and neighbouring local authorities as part of its review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, to assess whether an inflationary increase in the level of Basic Allowance should be considered. Included at Appendix 1 of the report is the comparator tables that we used to assess recent increases in inflation and earnings since the current level of Basic Allowance was set in 2016. Although we have noted that the Council is currently the lowest of the comparator authorities and the second lowest in Essex in terms of Basic Allowance, and serious consideration was given to proposing an increase in the Basic Allowance of 2-3% to account for inflation, the Panel do not consider it necessary to recommend any changes to the application of Basic Allowance for 2023/24.

10. We acknowledged that there were a considerable number of local businesses and residents who were suffering in the current economic climate engendered by the rise in living costs, and that this was not the time to recommend increases in the basic allowance. In addition, we also noted that there was no request for an increase from Councillors.

11. However, we are still concerned that the work undertaken by members of this Council could be perceived as being of lower value than the work undertaken by members of other Councils. This has been a concern of the Panel for a number of years now. Therefore, we consider that it is appropriate for the Panel to continue to revisit the application of Basic Allowance as part of its annual review of the Members' Allowances Scheme on an ongoing basis.

12. We are aware that the Council is currently the subject of an electoral review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), and the Panel feel that this represents an opportunity to undertake a full review of the Basic Allowance once this process is complete. We would expect the Council to give serious consideration to an increase in the Basic Allowance when we report back next year. Although we recognise that implementation of any increase would be a matter for the Council to determine and that there remains a continued need for restraint in the setting of the authority's annual budget.

Special Responsibility Allowance

13. Each local authority may make provision in its Members' Allowances Scheme for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA), for those Councillors who have been allocated significant responsibilities. The current Scheme provides that Members may receive more than one SRA if they hold more than one relevant position. It should be noted that each Special Responsibility Allowance is calculated as a multiplier of the Basic Allowance, therefore if the Basic Allowance is not increased then neither will be the Special Responsibility Allowances. However, as previously with the Basic Allowance, the Council has traditionally decided not to implement payment of full SRA amounts for a number of positions and to restrict these to a percentage of the amount set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme.

14. This percentage application of certain SRA is reflected in a Statement of Implementation that forms part of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Statement of

Implementation illustrates the operation of the Scheme in terms of the application of SRA as proportions of the amounts provided in the Scheme. However, we feel that this approach is not always fully understood and that members may not appreciate that the Council has decided not to implement payment of full SRA amounts recommended by the Panel, for certain positions.

15. Last year, we decided that as the majority of the SRA's had not been implemented at 100%, the recommendation of the Panel would be to increase the implementation levels of all the SRA's to 100% in 2022/23. However, this was not agreed by the Council and the implementation levels remained at their current level.

16. It should be noted that the Panel has encouraged the Council to increase the implementation level of the relevant SRA identified in the Members' Allowances Scheme, in order to achieve the full amount of each allowance as soon as possible for a number of years now. However, the Panel feel that there is an opportunity to fully review the SRAs and their implementation levels next year when the electoral review process has been completed. Again, we recognise that the implementation of any future increases would be a matter for the Council to determine and that there remains a continued need for restraint in the setting of the authority's annual budget, but we will continue to revisit the application of SRA's as part of our annual review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council

19. The Council agreed in December 2015 that, from the 2016/17 municipal year, consideration of the amount of SRA applied to the positions of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council be added to the responsibilities of the Panel.

20. We undertook a thorough review of the application of such SRA in 2018 and therefore make no recommendations in this regard for consideration as part of the Panel's review of the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24. However, the Panel reserve the right to review this SRA in the future as we noted that the allowance paid by this Council is higher than that paid by other comparable Councils.

Recommendations

21. The draft revised Members' Allowances Scheme for the 2023/24 municipal year, incorporating the recommendations contained within this report is attached at Appendix 2. The Scheme has been subject to minor drafting amendments, to reflect the Council's current management structure arrangements.

22. The Panel has also prepared a Statement of Implementation (based on the assumption that the Council will not increase the Basic Allowance nor the level of implementation of Special Responsibility Allowances) for publication on the Council's website. The format of the statement illustrates the operation of the Members' Allowances Scheme, in terms of the implementation of Special Responsibility Allowances as proportions of the amounts provided in the Scheme. The Statement of Implementation of the Special Responsibility Allowances set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme, is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.

23. We have not considered changes to any other elements of the Members' Allowances Scheme, such as travel and subsistence allowances etc. These are generally remunerated at levels that also apply to officers of the Council and are subject to national application.

24. The Panel would like to acknowledge the support and assistance that we received in undertaking our annual review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, and we recommend as

set out at the commencement of this report.

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FAMILY GROUP AUTHORITIES

ALLOWANCE	BROXBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL	BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL	EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL	EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL	GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL	HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL	HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
Basic Allowance	£5,659.00	£6,000.00	£5,200.00	£5,428.79	£4,300.00	£7,405.00	£6,287.00	£5,470.00
Special Responsibility Allowances								
Chairman of Council	£7,074 (Mayor)	£4,500.00 (Mayor)	£3,000.00	£6,500.00	£8,600 (80% of total allowance)	£5924.00 (Mayor)	Not identifiable from Scheme	£5,310.00
Vice-Chairman of Council	£1,415 (Deputy Mayor)	£1500.00 (Deputy Mayor)	Not identifiable from Scheme	£1,450.00	£2,150 (20% of total allowance)	£3,703.00 (Deputy Mayor)	Not identifiable from Scheme	£1,780.00
Leader	£19,807.00	£13,200.00	£18,000.00	£19,767.00	£7,875.00 (73% of £10,750)	£14,810.00	£26,112.00	£15,587.00
Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders)	£7,923.00	No equivalent in Scheme	£6,000.00	£9,780.96	£6,300.00 (98% of £6,450)	£5,924.00	£13,906.00	£7,285.00
Chairman of District Development Management Committee (or equivalent)	£7,074.00	£3,550.00	£6,000.00	£7,336.00	£2,362.00 (73% of £3,225)	£5,924.00	£5,756.00	No equivalent in Scheme
Chairmen of Area Plans Sub-Committees (or equivalent)	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£2,362.00 (73% of £3,225)	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£4,000.00
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or equivalent)	£7,074.00	£3,550.00	£2,000.00	£6,464.04	£3,150.00 (73% of £4,300)	£5,924.00	£4,849.00	£5,310.00
Chairmen of Licensing Committee (or equivalent)	Combined with Planning Committee	Combined with Planning Committee	£2,000.00	£6,051.00	£500.00	£3,703.00	£1,838.00	£2,535.00
Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committee (or equivalent)	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£1,862.00 (divided by number of meetings) (73% of £2,725)	£280.00 per meeting	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme
Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee (or equivalent)	£3,961.00	Combined with Scrutiny Committee	£2,000.00	£6,464.04	£2,150.00	£3,703.00	£1,838.00	£2,535.00
Chairmen of Select Committees (or equivalent)	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£2,150.00	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme
Chairman of Standards Committee	Combined with Audit Committee	Not identifiable from Scheme	£2,000.00	£2,421.00	£110 per meeting	Combined with Corporate Governance Committee (Audit)	£1,560.00	£2,535.00
Chairman of Constitution Working Group	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£500.00	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme
Independent Persons affiliated to the Standards Committee	£0.00	Reimbursed for reasonable expenses	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£500.00	£370.00	£300.00	£1,369.00
Independent Members of the Remuneration and Parish Remuneration Panels	£0.00	Reimbursed for reasonable expenses	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£250.00	£370.00	No equivalent in Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Co-opted Members of the Audit & Governance Committee	£0.00	Reimbursed for reasonable expenses	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£500.00	£370.00	No equivalent in Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Co-opted Members of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Not identifiable from Scheme	Reimbursed for reasonable expenses	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£500.00	£370.00	No equivalent in Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Group Leaders	£3,961 (Leader of the Opposition)	£5,350 (Main Opposition) £2,650 (Minority Opposition)	£3,000.00 (Minority Group Leader)	0.1 of BA multiplied by each group member	£0.00	£74 per Group Member	£3,675 (Main Opposition), £1,242 (Minority Opposition)	£3,856.50 (Minority Group Leader)

FAMILY GROUP AUTHORITIES (CONT)

ALLOWANCE	MID-SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL	REIGATE & BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL	SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL	SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL	ST. ALBANS CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL	TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL	THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL	WAVERLY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Basic Allowance	£5,200.00	£5,783.00	£5,715.00	£6,403.00	£5,770.00	£4,317.00	£4,627.00	£5,164.47
Special Responsibility Allowances								
Chairman of Council	£6,760.00	£5,700 (Mayor)	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£3,062.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	£612.18
Vice-Chairman of Council	£2,253.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£1,021.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Leader	£20,800.00	£14,151.00	£20,910.00	£11,000.00	£13,670.00	£6,123.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	£15,171.09
Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders)	£8,500.00	£9,434.00	£7,319.00	£7,700.00	£9,551.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£7,001.75
Chairman of District Development Management Committee (or equivalent)	No equivalent in Scheme	£5,442.00	£5,228.00	£6,600.00	No equivalent in Scheme	£3,062.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme
Chairmen of Area Plans Sub-Committees (or equivalent)	£6,500.00	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£3,333.00	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£3,500.53
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or equivalent)	£4,160.00	£3,162.00	£2,614.00	£2,200.00	£2,820.00	£3,062.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Chairmen of Licensing Committee (or equivalent)	£1,040.00	£441.00	£2,614.00	£5,500.00	£2,820.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£3,500.53
Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committee (or equivalent)	No equivalent in Scheme	£308.00	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£121.00 per meeting	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee (or equivalent)	£3,120.00	£3,162.00	£2,614.00	£4,400.00	£2,820.00	£3,062.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	£3,500.53
Chairmen of Select Committees (or equivalent)	£4,160.00	£441.00	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£3,062.00	No equivalent in Scheme	£3,500.53
Chairman of Standards Committee	£1,040.00	No equivalent in Scheme	£1,673.00	£1,500.00	No equivalent in Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£3,500.53
Chairman of Constitution Working Group	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme
Independent Persons affiliated to the Standards Committee	£750.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	£502.00	£750.00	£0.00	Reimbursed for reasonable expenses	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Independent Members of the Remuneration and Parish Remuneration Panels	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Reimbursed for reasonable expenses	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Co-opted Members of the Audit & Governance Committee	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£500.00	£0.00	Reimbursed for reasonable expenses	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Co-opted Members of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£0.00	Reimbursed for reasonable expenses	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Group Leaders	£250.00 per Group Member	£147 & £58 per Group Member	£282 per Group Member	Not identifiable from Scheme	£108 per member of group	£3,062.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	£3,500.53 (main opposition leader)

ESSEX AUTHORITIES

ALLOWANCE	BASILDON DISTRICT COUNCIL	BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL	CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL	CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL	COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL	HARLOW DISTRICT COUNCIL	MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL	ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Basic Allowance	£6,520.87	£5,154.00	£3,550.00	£6,234.00	£7,293.55	£4,575.00	£5,285.96 (includes £220 pa Broadband allowance)	£5,000.00
Special Responsibility Allowances								
Chairman of Council	£9,781.31 (Mayor)	£5,154.00	£6,137.00 (Mayor)	£13,521.00 (Mayor)	Not identifiable from Scheme	£2,601.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	£5,000.00
Vice-Chairman of Council	£1,630.22 (Deputy Mayor)	£2,577.00	£2,888 (Deputy Mayor)	£4,506.00 (Deputy Mayor)	Not identifiable from Scheme	£520	Not identifiable from Scheme	£2,500.00
Leader	£19,562.61	£15,462.00	£14,200.00	£25,074.00	£21,880.46	£7,117.00	£12,664.90	£10,000.00
Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders)	£11,411.52	£10,308.00	£7,100.00	£12,534.00	£13,128.43	£2,965.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	£5,000.00
Chairman of District Development Management Committee (or equivalent)	£11,411.52	£9,021.00	£3,550.00	£8,274.00	£7,658.24	£1,561.00	£5,065.96	£2,500.00
Chairmen of Area Plans Sub-Committees (or equivalent)	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£1,899.74	£500.00
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or equivalent)	£8,151.09	£7,731.00	£1,775.00	£8,274.00	£7,658.24	£1,561.00	£3,799.47	£3,500.00
Chairmen of Licensing Committee (or equivalent)	£9,781.31	£5,154.00	£1,775.00	£6,267.00	£6,564.31	£1,561.00	No equivalent in Scheme	£2,500.00
Chairman of Constitution Working Group	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£500.00
Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committee (or equivalent)	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£500.00
Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee (or equivalent)	£4,890.65	£5,154.00	£1,775.00	£1,257.00	£4,376.14	£1,561.00	£5,065.96	£2,500.00
Chairmen of Select Committees (or equivalent)	£4,890.65	£5,154.00	£1,775.00	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme	£500.00
Chairman of Standards Committee	£2,608.35	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£1,257.00	£4,376.14	Not identifiable from Scheme	£5,065.96	£500.00
Independent Persons affiliated to the Standards Committee	£1,304.17	Not identifiable from Scheme	£355.00	£623.40	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£500.00
Independent Members of the Remuneration and Parish Remuneration Panels	£1,304.17	Not identifiable from Scheme	£355.00	£623.40	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme
Co-opted Members of the Audit & Governance Committee	£1,304.17	Not identifiable from Scheme	£355.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£500.00
Co-opted Members of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£355.00	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme	£500.00
Group Leaders	£9,781.31 - split per number of members per group	£5,154.00 (Main Opposition Group) £1,290.00 (other Groups > 5 mbrs)	£3,550 (Leader of the Minority Group)	£8,274.00 (Main Opposition Group) £1,257.00 (Other Opposition Groups)	£2,186.47 plus £240.47 per member	£208 per group member (max £2,080)	£5,065.96 (Leader of Opposition)	£2,500.00

ESSEX AUTHORITIES (CONT)

ALLOWANCE	TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL	UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL						
Basic Allowance	£6,000.00	£5,346.49						
Special Responsibility Allowances								
Chairman of Council	£6,840.00	£4,277.19 + civic expenses						
Vice-Chairman of Council	£1,800.00	£2,138.60						
Leader	£20,400.00	£13,098.91						
Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders)	£9,780.00	£6,415.80						
Chairman of District Development Management Committee (or equivalent)	£7,140.00	£4,009.88						
Chairmen of Area Plans Sub-Committees (or equivalent)	No equivalent in Scheme	No equivalent in Scheme						
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or equivalent)	No equivalent in Scheme	£3,742.55						
Chairmen of Licensing Committee (or equivalent)	£3,000.00	£4,009.88						
Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committee (or equivalent)	£780.00	No equivalent in Scheme						
Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee (or equivalent)	£4,200.00	£3,742.55						
Chairmen of Select Committees(or equivalent)	£4,200.00	No equivalent in Scheme						
Chairman of Standards Committee	No equivalent in Scheme	£2,138.60						
Independent Persons affiliated to the Standards Committee	Not identifiable from Scheme	£534.64						
Independent Members of the Remuneration and Parish Remuneration Panels	Not identifiable from Scheme	£534.64						
Co-opted Members of the Audit & Governance Committee	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme						
Co-opted Members of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Not identifiable from Scheme	Not identifiable from Scheme						
Group Leaders	£900 & £96 per group member	£3,742.55 (main opposition leader), £2,138.60 (others)						

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL - REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES SCHEME

The Epping Forest District Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 1990 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001, hereby makes the following scheme:

1. Scheme

- 1.1 This scheme may be cited as the Epping Forest District Council Members' Allowance Scheme and shall have effect for the period from 26 May 2022 to 25 May 2023.

2. Definition

- 2.1 In this scheme:

"business mileage" means mileage incurred for journeys by Councillors between their homes and business venues or between the Civic Offices, Epping and business venues;

"Councillor" means a member of the Epping Forest District Council who is a Councillor;

"home to office mileage" means mileage incurred for journey by Councillors between their homes and the Civic Offices in Epping;

"independent person" means: (a) a member of the Standards Committee or the Remuneration Panel who is not an elected councillor; or (b) a co-opted member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Audit and Governance Committee who is not an elected councillor; and

"year" means the period ending with 25 May 2023.

3. Basic Allowance

- 3.1 Subject to Paragraph 7, £4,300 shall be paid to each Councillor. Payments are subject to deductions for tax and national insurance dependant on the circumstances of individual councillors.

4. Special Responsibility Allowances

- 4.1 For each year a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the allowances specified in Schedule 1 to this scheme. Special responsibility allowances shall be calculated as multipliers of the Basic Allowance. There is no restriction on the number of separate SRA's which are payable to an individual member.
- 4.2 Subject to Paragraph 7, the amount of each allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in Schedule 1 for the year.
- 4.3 The Council has decided not to implement payment of the full Special Responsibility Allowance amounts and to restrict these to a percentage of each allowance as set out in an annual statement of implementation.

5. Travelling and Subsistence (including Cycle Allowance)

- 5.1 These expenses may be claimed by members of the Council in connection with the carrying out of approved duties specified in Schedules 2, 3 and 4 of this scheme.
- 5.2 Payments may be claimed up to the maximum casual user rate set for officers of the Council as adjusted annually by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (travel expenses) and the East of England Regional Assembly (subsistence expenses).
- 5.3 Payment of home to office car mileage will be subject to deduction of tax and national insurance contributions, dependant on the circumstances of individual councillors. Business mileage incurred by councillors will not be subject to such deductions if the mileage rate claimed does not exceed 45 pence per mile.
- 5.4 Claims for the payment of business and/or home to office mileage may be made by members that have been driven to the approved duty giving rise to the claim, other than by way of taxi or other form of public transport, subject to the Council's usual checks and controls and the provision of appropriate VAT receipts.

6. Child Care and Dependant Carers' Allowances

- 6.1 The maximum rate for this allowance shall be set at a rate equivalent to the current National Living Wage.
- 6.2 A member of the Council or an independent person shall be eligible to claim up to four hours of the allowance for the performance of approved duties under this scheme and for the purpose of contributing to the cost of providing personal care to immediate dependants who are in need of care and supervision.
- 6.3 The rate applicable shall be subject to automatic increases on an annual basis in line with uprating of the National Living Wage.
- 6.4 The allowance is not payable in respect of carers who are members of the member's immediate and close family i.e. parents, children, spouses, co-habitees or members of the same household as the member.
- 6.5 All claims shall be subject to Audit checks and no claim in excess of the maximum level will be payable, whatever the circumstances.

7. Renunciation

- 7.1 A councillor or independent person may by notice in writing given to the Team Manager for Democratic & Electoral Services elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

8. Part-year Entitlements

- 8.1 The provisions of this paragraph shall have the effect of regulating the entitlements of a councillor to basic and special responsibility allowances where, in the course of a year, this scheme is amended or that councillor becomes, or ceases to be, a councillor, or accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility in respect of which a special responsibility allowance is payable.

- 8.2 If an amendment to this scheme changes and the amount to which a councillor is entitled by way of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance, then in relation to each of the periods:
- (a) beginning with the year and ending with the day before that on which the first amendment in that year takes effect; or
 - (b) beginning with the day on which an amendment takes effect and ending with the day before that on which the next amendment takes effect, or (if none) with the end of the year; and
 - (c) the entitlement to such an allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the amount of the allowance under this scheme as it has effect during the relevant period as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of the days in the period bears to the number of days in the year.
- 8.3 Where the term of office of a councillor begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year, the entitlement of that councillor to a basic allowance shall be to the payment to such part of the basic allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which his term of office subsists bears to the number of days in that year.
- 8.4 Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2), and the term of office of a councillor does not subsist throughout the period mentioned in such-paragraph (2)(a), the entitlement of any such councillor to a basic allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the basic allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole of the same proportion as the number of days during which his term of office as a councillor subsists bears to the number of days in that period.
- 8.5 Where a councillor has during part of, but not throughout a year such special responsibilities as entitle him or her to a special responsibility allowance, that councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of that allowance as bears to the whole of the same proportion as the number of days during which he/she has such special responsibilities, bears to the number of days in that year.
- 8.6 Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2), and a councillor has during part, but does not have throughout the whole, of any period mentioned in sub-paragraph (2)(a) of that paragraph any such special responsibilities as entitle him or her to a special responsibility allowance, that councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of the allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days in that period during which he or she has such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that period.

9. Claims and Payments

- 9.1 Payments shall be made in respect of basic and special responsibility allowances, subject to sub-paragraph (2), in instalments of one quarter of the amount specified in this scheme.
- 9.2 Where a payment of one-quarter of the amount specified in this scheme in respect of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance would result in the councillor receiving more than the amount to which by virtue of paragraph 8(1), he or she is

entitled, the payment shall be restricted to such amount as will ensure that no more is paid than the amount to which he or she is entitled.

- 9.3 Claims must be made within a period of one year of the duty being carried out. Payments after that period will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

10. Uprating for Inflation

- 10.1 There will be no inflationary adjustment to the allowances set out in this scheme, except those relating to travel and subsistence.

11. Co-optees' Allowance

- 11.1 Co-optees' allowance will be payable to independent persons as set out in Schedule 5 to this scheme.

12. Withholding/Recovery of Payments

- 12.1 Where any councillor or independent member has already received a payment in respect of any period during which they have been:

- (a) ceased to be a member of the Authority; or
- (b) not entitled in any other way to receive the allowance in respect of that period,

the Council may require that such part of the allowance as relates to the period in question shall be repaid to the Authority.

13. Pensionable Status

- 13.1 Remuneration payable to councillors of Epping Forest District Council under this scheme shall only be entitled to pensionable status in accordance with a scheme made under Section 7 of the Superannuation Act 1972, if the member opted into the Essex Superannuation Scheme before 1 April 2014.

- 13.2 For the purposes of a Paragraph 13.1 above basic allowance and special responsibility allowance will be treated as amounts in respect of which such pensions are payable in accordance with a scheme under that Act.

- 13.3 The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 removed access to the LGPS for Councillors from 1 April 2014, with the exception of those who were members of the Scheme on 31 March 2014, who retain access to the LGPS up to the end of their current term of office only (or to age 75 if earlier).

14. Further Guidance

- 14.1 Further guidance on this scheme can be found in Appendix 1.

SCHEDULE 1

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

1. The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable and the amounts of those allowances.

DUTY	ANNUAL TOTAL AMOUNT OF SRA
Chairman of the Council	£10,750.00
Vice-Chairman of the Council	
Leader of the Council	£10,750.00
Cabinet Members	£6,450.00 (each)
Chairman of the District Development Management Committee	£3,225.00
Chairmen of the Area Plans Sub-Committees	£3,225.00 (each)
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£4,300.00
Chairman of the Licensing Committee	£500.00
Chairmen of the Licensing Sub-Committees	£2,225.00 (allocated according to the number of meetings chaired each year)
Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee	£2,150.00
Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees	£2,150.00 (each)
Chairman of the Standards Committee	£110.00 per meeting held each year
Chairman of the Constitution Working Group	£500.00

SCHEDULE 2

APPROVED DUTIES

1. The following are specified as an approved duty for the purpose of the payment of travelling and subsistence expenses, attendance at any of the following:
 - (a) a meeting of the authority, the Cabinet, a Cabinet Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Panels, the Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees, or as a member of any other Committee or sub-committee, panel, working group, special committee or board of the authority;
 - (b) any other meeting held by the authority provided that:
 - where the authority is divided into two or more political groups, it is a meeting to which members of at least two such groups have been invited; or
 - if the authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the authority have been invited;

- (c) duties relating to the supervision of tender opening as required by the Council's Procurement Rules;
 - (d) attendance as representative of the Council at any approved conference or meeting of the outside organisations set out in Schedules 3 and 4;
 - (e) attendance at any meeting or other official function at the request of the Chief Executive, the Strategic Directors or a Service Director, including meetings between group representatives for a particular Committee and officers;
 - (f) any other duty approved by the Council or the Cabinet or any other committee, sub-committee, special committee or Board or Panel or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of functions or the body, or of any of its committees or sub-committees;
 - (g) attendance by a councillor at a meeting of which he or she is not a member for the purpose of explaining a motion referred from the Council;
 - (h) attendance as a councillor at the invitation of the Local Government Ombudsman for the purpose of investigating a complaint against this Council of maladministration;
 - (i) attendance as an appointed representative of Epping Forest District Council at any meeting of Essex County Council or any of its committees or sub-committees for the purpose of formal consultations on any matter affecting the powers or duties of this Council or the district or any part thereof;
 - (j) attendance on behalf of the Council or the Cabinet or as a Chairman on behalf of a Committee at an official function;
 - (k) attendance at seminars and training courses arranged by the authority;
 - (l) consultation meetings arranged by the authority where the member's attendance is required or where the business directly affects the member's ward;
 - (m) site visits arranged by Area Plans Sub-Committees or the District Development Management Committee;
 - (n) informal site visits by individual councillors in respect of their duties as members of an Area Plans Sub-Committee;
 - (o) attendance at a meeting concerning joint working or partnership arrangements to represent the Council's interests; and
 - (p) attendance at any civic event to which the Chairman or Vice-Chairman is attending in that capacity (or representative) for which Council funded transport is not provided.
2. There is specified as an approved duty for the purpose of paying travelling and subsistence expenses attendance at any of the outside organisations shown in Schedule 4.
 3. Attendance by members of the Council at meetings of outside organisations not shown in Schedule 4 shall NOT qualify for payment of travelling and subsistence expenses.

SCHEDULE 3

CONFERENCE AND MEETINGS

Conference and meetings organised by any person or body who is not doing so by way of trade nor whose objects are wholly or partly political, attendance at which is authorised by or on behalf of the authority and which does not involve an absence overnight from the councillor's normal place of residence.	Appropriate subsistence and travelling expenses (second class return rail fare or car mileage at the appropriate rates whichever is the less if travel outside the Epping Forest District is required).
Conferences and meetings organised by any person or body who is not doing so by way of trade, nor whose objects are wholly or partly political, attendance at which is authorised by or on behalf of the authority and which involves an absence from the councillor's normal place of residence of one or more nights.	Appropriate subsistence and travelling expenses (second class return rail fare or car mileage at the appropriate rate whichever is the less if travelling outside the Epping Forest District is required).

SCHEDULE 4

OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Attendance as appointed representative of the Council on any outside organisations, such attendances being deemed approved duty for the purpose of paying subsistence and travelling expenses.

SCHEDULE 5

CO-OPTEE'S ALLOWANCE

Independent Persons affiliated to the Standards Committee	£500.00 per annum
Independent Members of the Remuneration Panel and Parish Remuneration Panel	£250.00 per annum
Co-opted members of the Audit and Governance Committee	£500.00 per annum
Co-opted independent members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£500.00 per annum

MEMBER REMUNERATION SCHEME

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
GUIDANCE NOTE ON ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES FOR MEMBERS**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A Councillor is eligible for the payment of attendance allowances and for reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses in respect of approved duties carried out on behalf of the Council. An approved duty is one which has been authorised by or on behalf of the Council in advance.
- 1.2 The Council has a formal scheme for allowances which is updated from time to time. A copy of the scheme is set out in the Constitution. This note is of a more informal nature and is designed to assist members in dealing with their claims and explaining the arrangements to the public.

2. BASIC ALLOWANCE

- 2.1 This is a flat rate allowance payable to all members of the Council. This annual amount is paid in quarterly instalments. Members do not have to claim this amount. The full amount of the Basic Allowance is £4,300.00 per member, per annum.
- 2.2 The Council requires each of its elected councillors to be registered as a data controller in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. Although members are responsible for their individual compliance with the data protection principles of the General Data Protection Regulation, the Council coordinates the registration (and annual renewal) process on behalf of members and an amount of £40.00 is therefore withheld from the Basic Allowance each year to meet the registration fee imposed by the Information Commissioner.

3. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE

- 3.1 This is a special allowance payable to the Leader, Cabinet members and certain Chairmen. It is designed to reflect the additional responsibilities of these office holders. This amount is paid in quarterly instalments during the year and does not have to be claimed.
- 3.2 The Special Responsibility Allowance applicable to the chairmen of the Standards Committee and the Licensing Sub-Committees is applied on a 'per-meeting' basis and is paid in a single instalment at year-end.
- 3.3 The Council has decided not to implement payment of the full Special Responsibility Allowance amounts and to restrict these to a percentage of each allowance set out in the Scheme.

4. TRAVEL EXPENSES

- 4.1 Members may re-claim reasonable travel expenses (including public transport tickets, taxi fares, parking costs where appropriate subject to submission of evidence of expenditure) in respect of approved duties as defined in the scheme (Schedule 2).

Car Travel

- 4.2 The normal rates for car travel are the same as the higher rates paid to officers classed as casual users. Claims must be fixed on the rates applicable at the time of the journey. These rates are set out on the claim form and are reviewed annually.

Shortest Distance

- 4.3 Claims for car travel should be by reference to the shortest distance from home to the Council offices or other venue for the approved duty concerned. No claim for additional expenses will be entertained unless there is a valid reason for incurring the additional mileage.

Travel Direct from Place of Employment etc

- 4.4 For claims involving direct travel from a Councillor's place of employment (or other departure point) for an approved duty, the distance claims shall be limited to the home to meeting venue element of the journey. All such claims must be endorsed "CLAIM LIMITED" on the form.

Travel outside the District – Limit on Amount Claimable

- 4.5 For journeys to approved meetings outside the District or by members resident outside the district, claims irrespective of mode of travel must not exceed the lower of:
- (a) second class return rail fare plus underground and other fares from station to destination at each end of the journey; or
 - (b) the appropriate car mileage.
- 4.6 This is subject to consideration of any special circumstances as set out in 4.7 below.

Travel over Long Distances – Special Circumstances

- 4.7 If, for any reason, a councillor undertakes travel over long distances or from outside the District, members are advised to contact the Service Manager (Governance) in advance for advice on what would constitute a reasonable claim in the circumstances.

Use of Public Transport within Epping Forest District

- 4.8 The rate for travel by public transport must not exceed the ordinary fare (or any available cheap fare). A member may not claim travelling expenses in respect of a single duty from more than one body. In all such claims evidence of expenditure (i.e. tickets or other receipts) MUST be provided. No claim will be allowed without such evidence.

Cycle Allowance

- 4.9 This allowance is payable at the highest of the higher casual rates paid to officers classed as casual users.

Child and Dependant Carer's Allowance

- 4.10 This allowance may be claimed at a rate equivalent to the current rate for the National Living Wage. Certain conditions are set out in the Scheme.

5. SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES

- 5.1 Subsistence expenses (covering refreshments and meals etc paid for by a member) are claimable by councillor in respect of making attendances connected with approved duties on behalf of the Council. The rates for such expenses are set out (by reference to meal time and periods of absence) on the reverse of the form which is supplied to members on a quarterly basis. These rates may not be exceeded. Periods of absence will be calculated on the basis of departure from home or place of work if it is not possible to return home in the time available.
- 5.2 All claims for subsistence must be accompanied by receipts in respect of meals etc as evidence of expenditure actually having been incurred. No claims will be allowed in the absence of such evidence.
- 5.3 Special arrangements exist in respect of subsistence expenses in respect of duties involving an absence overnight from a councillor's normal place of residence. These are outlined under Section 7 relating to conferences.
- 5.4 A councillor may not claim subsistence expenses in respect of a single duty from more than one body.

6. CONFERENCES

- 6.1 Attendance at conferences and the payment of allowances and expenses are subject to prior approval by the Council, Cabinet, appropriate committee, Leader or Deputy Leader in all cases. **Attendance at conferences and the payment of allowances and expenses may also be subject to prior approval by the chairman of the appropriate committee.**
- 6.2 All conferences deemed to be approved duties shall, in accordance with statutory requirements, be relevant to the District and not wholly or partly commercial or political in their objectives.

Allowances for Attendance at Conferences (Involving an Absence from Home)

(a) Subsistence - Nights Away from Home

- 6.3 For conferences involving one or more night's absence, claims can be made for reasonable day or overnight expenses that are necessarily and exclusively incurred in the attendance as an authorised representative of the Council at a meeting, conference or seminar that it held outside of the Epping Forest District.

(b) Claims for Subsistence

- 6.4 These claims should cover such items as hotel bills, refreshments, meals (other than free meals which should be discounted) and similar items. No claims will be allowed unless evidence is provided of all expenditure being claimed. All relevant bills and receipts should be forwarded to the Service Manager (Governance) with claims.

Travel Claims

- 6.5 The guidance outlined under paragraph 4.5 will apply to all conferences.

7. TAXATION AND NATIONAL INSURANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Details of the tax and national insurance implications of allowance payments and expenses claimed are available through Democratic Services. In such matters, members are advised to seek advice from their tax office in the event of any concerns.
- 7.2 Supplementary Note Regarding Treatment of Claims for Travel Expenses by Car for Tax and National Insurance Purposes.

(a) Travel by Car – Councillors’ Homes to Civic Offices Expenses (“Home to Office Mileage”)

- 7.3 Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) deems a councillor’s workplace for the purposes of their role as an elected representative to be the Civic Offices, Epping. From April 2016, ‘Home to Office Mileage’ is no longer subject to tax and national insurance deductions, provided that the distance between a councillor’s home and the Civic Offices is no more than 20 miles.
- 7.4 If the upper rate of mileage is also claimed (any amount above 45p per mile) this part of the payment will be treated as a taxable benefit and national insurance will be deducted. A petrol/diesel VAT receipt will be required to be submitted with all claims before payment can be made, which must predate the first date of mileage on the submitted claim. The receipt must also be dated within a reasonable timeframe of the first journey for which a claim is made.

(b) Travel by Car – Councillors’ Homes to Other Venues or Civic Offices to Other Venues for the Purposes of Council Business (“Business Mileage”)

- 7.5 HMRC has determined that such travel shall not be subject to tax or national insurance deductions except where the rate of reimbursement exceeds 45 pence per mile. Travel to any meetings of the Council or its subordinate bodies which are held at a location other than the Civic Offices is deemed to be business mileage.

(c) Second Journeys

- 7.6 Second journeys will be subject to taxation and National Insurance deductions depending on whether the journey constitutes home to office or business mileage.

8. ALTERATION OF CLAIMS

- 8.1 All claim forms submitted by members are checked for accuracy. The Team Manager for Democratic & Electoral Services is authorised to reduce incorrect claims in the following circumstances:

- (a) where a member does not attend at a claimed meeting;
- (b) where a claimed meeting is not approved;
- (c) where an incorrect amount of allowance is claimed; and
- (d) where a correct date has not been claimed.

- 8.2 Any changes under paragraph 8.1 will be notified to members after the claim form has been processed. Any other problems with members' claims will be referred back for the claimant and processing of the claim will not take place until the query has been clarified.

9. INTERPRETATION

- 9.1 These guidelines are subject to the overall interpretation of the Chief Executive as to what constitutes a reasonable claim in any individual circumstances.

10. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Prepared/Revised	Written by	Agreed/Authorised	Details of Change(s)
November 2015	S. Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)	Remuneration Panel (17/11/15) Council (15/12/15)	Review of Scheme for 2016/17 municipal year
October 2016	S. Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)	Remuneration Panel (28/9/16) Council (20/12/16)	Review of Scheme for 2017/18 municipal year
November 2017	S. Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)	Remuneration Panel (30/10/17) Council (21/12/17)	Review of Scheme for 2018/19 municipal year
November 2018	S. Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)	Remuneration Panel (29/11/18) Council (20/12/18)	Review of Scheme for 2019/20 municipal year
November 2019	S. Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)	Remuneration Panel (31/10/19) Council (17/12/19)	Review of Scheme for 2020/21 municipal year
January 2021	G. Woodhall (Team Manager – Democratic & Electoral Services)	Remuneration Panel (27-Jan-21) Council (25-Feb-21)	Review of Scheme for 2021/22 municipal year
February 2022	G. Woodhall (Team Manager – Democratic & Electoral Services)	Remuneration Panel (2-Feb-22) Council (24-Feb-22)	Review of Scheme for 2022/23 municipal year

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SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - STATEMENT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION 2022/23

**The following scheme has been agreed for the period
from 26 May 2022 to 25 May 2023**

The Council decided at its meeting on 24 February 2022 to implement the amount of Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees Allowances provided in the scheme as set out below:

BASIC ALLOWANCE	ANNUAL BASIC ALLOWANCE	IMPLEMENTATION OF BASIC ALLOWANCE
All Councillors	£4,300	£4,300 (100%)

The amounts set out below show the amounts of Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) payable during the year:

DUTY	ANNUAL SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE	IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE
Chairman of the Council	£10,750 (total)	£8,600 (80%)
Vice-Chairman of the Council		£2,150 (20%)
Leader of the Council	£10,750	£7,875 (73%)
Cabinet members	£6,450 (each)	£6,300 (98%)
Chairman of the District Development Management Committee	£3,225	£2,362 (73%)
Chairmen of the Area Plans Sub-Committees	£3,225	£2,362 (73%)
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£4,300	£3,150 (73%)

Chairman of the Licensing Committee	£500	£500
Chairmen of the Licensing Sub-Committees	£2,725 (allocated according to the number of meetings each year)	£1,862 (allocated according to the number of meetings each year) (73%)
Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee	£2,150	£2,150
Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees	£2,150	£2,150 (each)
Chairman of the Standards Committee	£110 (per meeting)	£110 (per meeting)
Chairman of the Constitution Working Group	£500	£500

The amounts payable during the year for independent and co-opted members are:

Independent Persons affiliated to the Standards Committee	£500
Independent Members of the Remuneration Panel and Parish Remuneration Panel	£250
Co-opted members of the Audit and Governance Committee	£500
Co-opted independent members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£500

A copy of the full scheme is available on request from Democratic Services, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, CM16 4BZ.

Report to the Council

Committee: Constitution Working Group (Councillor P Bhanot)

Date: 13 December 2022

1. DocuSign – proposed amendment to the Constitution – Article 15 – Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters

Recommending:

- (1) That an additional sentence at (9), to read: “The common seal may be in physical or electronic form as determined by the Monitoring Officer”, be incorporated into Article 15 – Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters; and**
- (2) That pursuant to Recommendation (1) above, the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary revisions to the Council’s Constitution.**

Report:

- 1.1 The Working Group considered a report at its meeting on 1 November 2022. N Boateng, the Monitoring Officer, proposes an amendment to Article 15 under the section entitled “Common Seal of the Council”.
- 1.2 It is proposed to incorporate an additional sentence at (9), to read: “The common seal may be in physical or electronic form as determined by the Monitoring Officer”. Please see attached Appendix 1 of Article 15, for information.
- 1.3 The additional paragraph will give flexibility, as determined by the Monitoring Officer, and will allow DocuSign to be used for signing or sealing contracts and agreements on behalf of the Council, when necessary.
- 1.4 The Working Group has agreed that the proposed flexibility to use an electronic signature or seal is a practical solution.
- 1.5 Therefore, the Working Group is recommending to Council for approval, that an additional paragraph (9), as detailed in 1.2 above, be incorporated into Article 15 – Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters.

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ARTICLE 15 - FINANCE, CONTRACTS AND LEGAL MATTERS

1. This article refers on to the authority's Financial and Contract Rules, which are contained in Part 5 of this Constitution and to Sections 135, 151, 223 & 234, Local Government Act 1972 Part VIII, Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Financial Management

2. The management of the Council's financial affairs will be conducted in accordance with:
 - (a) The Budget and Policy Framework set out in Part 4 of this Constitution; and
 - (b) Financial Regulations within Part 4 of this Constitution.

Contracts

3. Every contract made by the Council will comply with the Contracts Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution unless a waiver has first been obtained by report to Portfolio Holder or the Cabinet as appropriate.

Legal Proceedings

4. The Council's Legal Services Manager is authorised to institute, defend or participate in any legal proceedings in any case where such action is necessary to give effect to decisions of the Council or in any case where the Head of Paid Service considers that such action is necessary to protect the Council's interests. Further details are set out in the scheme of delegation in Part 3 of this Constitution.

Authentication of Documents

5. Where any document is necessary to any legal procedure or proceedings on behalf of the Council, it will be signed by the Legal Services Manager or other person authorised by him/her, unless any enactment otherwise authorises or requires, or the Council has given requisite authority to some other person.

Common Seal of the Council

6. The Common Seal of the Council will be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Legal Services Manager. A decision of the Council, or of any part of it, will be sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the decision.
7. The Common Seal will be affixed to those documents which in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer should be sealed or are required by the Procurement Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution..
8. The affixing of the Common Seal will be attested by person(s) authorised by the Leader or Cabinet as set out in Part 3 (Executive Delegations) of this Constitution.
9. **The common seal may be in physical or electronic form as determined by the Monitoring Officer.**

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Report to Council

Date of meeting: 13 December 2022

Chairman: Councillor H Kane

Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (01992 564243)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report for November 2022 be noted.**

Report:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 3 November 2022

1. The Committee scrutinised the transfer of Grounds Maintenance to Qualis ahead of Cabinet on 7 November 2022. A Small introduced the report, which proposed to transfer the service on 1 April 2023. Qualis had established a vision for itself as a property company promoting and undertaking property development, management and maintenance. The report provided a high-level summary of the current costs of delivering the existing in-house service, including an indicative Contract Payment in the event of the transfer of the Grounds Maintenance service. The business case for the transfer represented an efficient way to deliver this service. It enabled the Council to reduce its back-office costs and offset these against the Qualis Management charge. However, members needed to be assured that there was a tangible benefit to the Council before any transfer could take place.

Members had many varied questions that covered the TUPE process for the staff involved in this service transfer and what support would be available to them, and that staff turnover in the Ground Maintenance team could lead to the development of a two-tier system as new staff joined. There was concern at the effect of the transfer on current clients and how the service would be better. Also, as some members had been contacted by residents about housing repairs not being done or delayed after this service transfer, there did not seem to be effective scrutiny in place in terms of housing repairs and Council tenants, yet the transfer of another service was being proposed. It was noted that progress and financial performance would be regularly monitored and reported back through the relevant scrutiny committee. However, the Committee's recommendation to Cabinet following a lively debate was that at this stage the Committee felt unable to support the transfer of Grounds Maintenance to Qualis, as a proposed motion was carried.

2. Feedback from members who attended the October scrutiny course from an external trainer was positive and proved a success, so next year two external scrutiny courses would be organised.
3. There was a request to look at the recommendations made by a past scrutiny task and finish panel on services for older people and how they had been updated especially in the current economic crisis. This would be progressed by senior officers in consultation with the Chairman. The Committee's work programme was also noted.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17 November 2022

- (4) The Chairman clarified that following Councillor J H Whitehouse's question at the previous meeting for a review of the recommendations made by a past Task and Finish Panel on Services for Older People and Disabled People in 2007, relevant officers were looking into how this could best be progressed. However, it was deemed more appropriate that an update report be made to a future meeting of the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

- (5) Reflecting on the 3 November meeting, the Chairman had noticed members' concerns about the transfer of services to Qualis. Councillor H Kane informed the Committee that after subsequently speaking with S Jevans (Qualis Group Managing Director) and A Small (Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer), S Jevans would attend a future meeting of this Committee and report on the quality of services with a view to providing statistics with real figures rather than percentages.
- (6) The Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of the Corporate Performance Reporting for quarter 2 on the project status summary, key milestones and RAG status for those projects identified as a 'Priority Project' within the portfolio. Members' questions encompassed many of the projects but especially on the waste contract. Missed collections were causing many residents to contact Customer Services and this was impacting on Customer Services meeting its key performance indicator targets on customer satisfaction.
- (7) A member of the public asked the following question on safeguarding at the meeting, "Have any reports been made in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.2 of the Shareholders Agreement with Qualis Group Ltd since it was signed in February 2020?" On behalf of the Chairman, the Chief Executive, G Blakemore, replied, "yes". However, in answer to a follow-up question on the result of the investigation, G Blakemore advised that she was not in a position to discuss the investigation but on whether the report was included, the answer was yes.
- (8) The chairman reported on the business transacted at their previous select committee meetings except for Stronger Council, as the October meeting had not taken place owing to a lack of business. Another meeting had been scheduled for 24 November.
- (9) The Committee also monitored the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for November 2022 and reviewed its own work programme.