



# Epping Forest District Council

## **CABINET** **Monday 15th January 2024**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Cabinet**, which will be held at:

**Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping**  
on **Monday 15th January 2024**  
at **7.00 pm**

**Georgina Blakemore**  
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services**                      V Messenger (Democratic Services)  
**Officer:**                                      Tel: (01992) 564243

**Members:**                                      Councillors C Whitbread (Leader of Council & Leader of the  
Conservative Group) (Chairman), N Bedford (Deputy Leader  
& Place Portfolio Holder) (Vice-Chairman), R Balcombe,  
S Kane, S Patel, J Philip, H Whitbread and K Williamson

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND**

**[This meeting will be broadcast live and recorded for repeated viewing.](#)**

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### **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

This meeting is to be webcast and the Chairman will read the following announcement:

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

Therefore, by participating in this meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If any public speakers on MS Teams do not wish to have their image captured, they should ensure that their video setting throughout the meeting is turned off and set to audio only.

Please also be aware that if technical difficulties interrupt the meeting that cannot be overcome, I may need to adjourn the meeting.

**Members are reminded to activate their microphones before speaking”.**

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To be announced at the meeting.

To report non-attendance before the meeting, please use the [Members Portal webpage](#) to ensure your query is properly logged.

Alternatively, you can access the Members portal from the front page of the [Council's website](#), at the bottom under 'Contact Us'.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on this agenda.

**4. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 14)**

To confirm the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 4 December and 18 December 2023.

**5. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

To receive oral reports from Portfolio Holders on current issues concerning their Portfolios, which are not covered elsewhere on this agenda.

**6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET**

To receive any questions submitted by members of the public and any requests to address the Cabinet.

**(a) Public Questions**

To answer questions asked by members of the public after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within Part 4 of the Constitution (Council Rules, Rule Q3) on any matter in relation to which the Cabinet has powers or duties or which affects the District.

**(b) Requests to Address the Cabinet**

Any member of the public or a representative of another organisation may address the Cabinet on any agenda item (except those dealt with in private session as exempt or confidential business) due to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions contained within Article 7 of the Constitution (The Executive, Paragraphs 27 and 28).

**7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

To consider any matters of concern to the Cabinet arising from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and to identify any matters that the Cabinet would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine as part of its work programme.

**8. EMERGENCY ALARM UPGRADE (Pages 15 - 18)**

(Housing and Strategic Health Partnerships – Cllr H Whitbread) To note the attached report detailing the update on the emergency alarm upgrade (C-037-2023-24).

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs 6 and 24 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution requires that the permission of the Chairman be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

In accordance with Operational Standing Order 6 (non-executive bodies), any item raised by a non-member shall require the support of a member of the Committee concerned and the Chairman of that Committee. Two weeks' notice of non-urgent items is required.

**10. PROCUREMENT OF WASTE FLEET VEHICLES (Pages 19 - 22)**

(Contracts, Service Delivery and Improvement – Cllr R Balcombe) To consider the attached report to award a contract hire and vehicle maintenance agreement to Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) (C-038-2023-24).

**Please note that Appendix A is restricted – see item 12).**

**11. 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):

<b>Agenda Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</b>
12	<b>Appendix A</b> of the report on Procurement of Waste Fleet Vehicles	3

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 one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers for four years after the date of the meeting. Inspection of background papers can be arranged by contacting either the Responsible Officer or the Democratic Services Officer for the particular item.

**12. APPENDIX A - PROCUREMENT OF WASTE FLEET VEHICLES (Page 23)**

(Contracts, Service Delivery, and Improvements – Cllr Ray Balcombe) Appendix A of the Procurement of Waste Fleet Vehicles (C-038-2023-24).

## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	Monday 4 December 2023
<b>Place:</b>	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	<b>Time:</b>	7.00 - 7.30 pm
<b>Members Present:</b>	Councillors N Bedford (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), R Balcombe, S Patel, J Philip, H Whitbread and K Williamson		
<b>Other Councillors:</b>	Councillors R Brookes, S Heap, J Parsons and J M Whitehouse		
<b>Other Councillors (Virtual):</b>	Councillors C McCredie and D Wixley		
<b>Apologies:</b>	C Whitbread and S Kane		
<b>Officers Present:</b>	G Blakemore (Chief Executive), T Carne (Corporate Communications Team Manager), J Gould (Strategic Director and Chief Operating Officer), V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer), R Moreton (Corporate Communications Officer), A Small (Strategic Director, Corporate and Section 151 Officer), J Warwick (Service Director (Contracts, Partnerships and Procurement)) and G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services)		
<b>Officers Present (Virtually):</b>	N Finney (Interim Implementation Team Manager) and M Picking (Democracy & Elections Apprentice)		

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### 63. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Deputy Leader of Council made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

### 64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 65. MINUTES

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 November 2023 be taken as read and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

### 66. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

There were no verbal reports made by Members of the Cabinet on current issues affecting their areas of responsibility.

**67. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET**

The Cabinet noted that no public questions or requests to address the Cabinet had been received for consideration at the meeting.

**68. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Chairman, Councillor D Wixley, reported that at the last meeting on 21 November 2023 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the draft Place Delivery Strategy for Epping Forest District. Also, members pre-scrutinised the Qualis Quarter 4 Budget Monitoring Report and Qualis Business Plan. The Committee heard that Mr B Johnson was the new Chair of the Group Board, and the Financial Director was Mr A Howarth. On the 12 December, the Committee and the Cabinet would be discussing the draft budget for 2024/25 but the meeting would be held in private session.

**69. RISK MANAGEMENT - CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

Councillor J Philip (Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder) reported that the Audit and Governance Committee had reviewed risk management and the Corporate Risk Register at its meeting on 30 November 2023. The Portfolio Holder emphasised the importance of delivering a balanced budget. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be looking at the draft budget on 12 December 2023. The Council had to have a balanced budget and that was a risk. In relation to Shared Services if business was being delivered then it was working. Shared Services had the potential to help EFDC going forward and in the future.

Councillor C McCredie remarked that climate change (reference SUS001) was in the red category so would this meet the target of net zero in 2030? The Portfolio Holder replied that the Risk Register showed the likelihood against the impact of risk and more detail was given on page 20 of the agenda for SUS001. This was what EFDC could achieve and mitigate the risk as much as possible.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

**Decision:**

- (1) That the Cabinet approved the current Corporate Risk Register and considered that the risks were appropriately scored.
- (2) That the Cabinet considered there were not any new or emerging risks to the Corporate Risk Register that should be referred to the officer Risk Management Group.
- (3) That the Cabinet approved the revised Risk Management Policy and Strategy.

**70. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOCAL PLAN**

Councillor N Bedford (Place Portfolio Holder) introduced the report which provided the Cabinet with an update on the progress of Local Plan implementation in relation to the Strategic Masterplans, Concept Framework Plans and Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) within the District, including major projects and planning applications dealt with by the team. The Infrastructure Funding Statement to financial year 2022/2023 set out s106 legal agreements completed in that year, the types and

values of contributions included in the agreements and the monies paid to the Council.

District & County Councillor H Whitbread commented that Essex County Council Highways were consulted on planning applications but did not consult with the Local Highways Panel (LHP) or on detailed schemes Essex County Councillors were involved with. What extra steps would the Council be taking as she recommended that County Councillors were consulted on draft master plan applications? N Finney (Interim Implementation Team Manager) replied that on large schemes the County Council was involved with pre-application negotiations, which went beyond highway safety. He did take the LHP on board and would feature it in the future. He agreed with Councillor H Whitbread that County Councillors would be consulted on draft master plan applications.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse asked if s106 values were indexed linked for interest. N Finney replied s106 monies were index linked to the point they were paid and then spent as soon as possible, given the inflation situation. There was a large amount in the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC) mitigation monies. Some had been passed to the City of London Corporation, other s106 monies covered air quality mitigation schemes, affordable housing provision for EFDC Housing and primary healthcare, as the new Integrated Care Board was established.

Councillor D Wixley asked about the mitigation measures the monies were being spent on for Epping Forest. N Finney replied that a range of measures were being investigated and some monies were being used on monitoring and updated traffic surveys. Councillor J Philip advised Councillor Wixley to look at the Council minutes during 2016 when he gave a response on this.

Councillor J Philip sought clarification in Appendix A on the 'Delivery due to commence dates' for the Masterplan and Concept Frameworks areas. Councillor N Bedford replied that discussions were taking place on the hospital in East Harlow and developers had come forward. The Quality Review Panel were reviewing planning proposals on development schemes, so there was ongoing progression.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

**Decision:**

- (1) That the Cabinet noted the progress of Strategic Masterplans and Concept Frameworks, including the use of Planning Performance Agreements and the progress of proposals at pre-application and application stage (see Appendix A of the agenda report).
- (2) That the Cabinet agreed the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/2023 (see Appendix B of the agenda report) for online publication by 31 December 2023.

**71. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR OFF-STREET PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

Since 2016, off-street parking enforcement had been undertaken through a parking enforcement contract with Marston Holding Ltd (via NSL Limited) which expired on 31 March 2024. A new contract for off-street car park enforcement was required from 1 April 2024. Therefore, a tendering exercise had been undertaken to procure the enforcement services and achieve best value for money. Following the evaluation of tenders, it was recommended that the contract for off-street enforcement be awarded

to Marston Holdings Ltd, the Council's incumbent contractor. Councillor J Philip stated that the cost of the contract would be funded from the existing parking enforcement contract budget. As the new contract would generate a saving to the Council, it was important not to spend more money than the Council brought in.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

**Decision:**

- (1) That the Cabinet agreed the contract for off-street parking enforcement be awarded to Marston Holdings Ltd from 1st April 2024 for a period of five (5) years with an option to extend by two (2) years.
- (2) That the Cabinet agreed the yearly contract cost of £229,830.03, subject to yearly uplift of CPI, be allocated from the existing budget provision.
- (3) That the Cabinet agreed to the trialling of IPS pay & display machines at two car parks (free of charge by the contractor) to enable EFDC to assess its performance and consider replacing the existing parking equipment.

**72. CALENDAR OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2024/25**

G Woodhall (Democratic and Electoral Services Team Manager) outlined the report, which the Cabinet considered each year prior to its final approval by the Council. The calendar of meetings has been developed over time to meet the changing needs of the authority and no fundamental changes have been proposed for 2024/25. Next year's religious festivals and Party conference dates had been taken into consideration.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

**Decision:**

That the Cabinet agreed to recommend to the Council for adoption the draft Calendar of Council Meetings for 2024/25 (see Appendix A of the agenda report).

**73. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

**CHAIRMAN**



## **EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	Monday 18 December 2023
<b>Place:</b>	Council Chamber - Civic Offices	<b>Time:</b>	7.00 - 7.45 pm
<b>Members Present:</b>	Councillors C Whitbread (Chairman), N Bedford (Vice-Chairman), R Balcombe, S Kane, S Patel, J Philip, H Whitbread and K Williamson		
<b>Other Councillors:</b>	Councillors I Allgood, R Brookes, H Kauffman, T Matthews, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley		
<b>Other Councillors (Virtually):</b>	Councillors C McCredie and S Heap		
<b>Apologies:</b>	None		
<b>Officers Present:</b>	G Blakemore (Chief Executive), T Carne (Corporate Communications Team Manager), J Gould (Strategic Director and Chief Operating Officer), C Hartgrove (Interim Chief Financial Officer), V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer), R Moreton (Corporate Communications Officer) and A Small (Strategic Director, Corporate and Section 151 Officer)		
<b>Officers Present (Virtually):</b>	M Picking (Democracy & Elections Apprentice)		
<b>Also in Attendance:</b>	S Jevans (Qualis Group Managing Director) and A Howarth (Interim Finance Director)		

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### [A RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR REPEATED VIEWING](#)

#### **74. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Leader of Council made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

#### **75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **76. MINUTES**

That the Cabinet noted the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023 would be approved by the Cabinet on 15 January 2024.

#### **77. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

There were no verbal reports made by Members of the Cabinet on current issues affecting their areas of responsibility.

**78. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET****(a) Public Questions**

None were received.

**(b) Requests to address the Cabinet**

The Chairman of Chigwell Parish Council, Councillor C Jefcoate, addressed the Cabinet on the two agenda items below, which can be viewed on the Council's You Tube channel.

- Qualis 4-Year Business Plan
- Qualis Quarter 4 (Year 4) 2022/23 Budget Monitoring Report

**79. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Chairman, Councillor D Wixley, reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the Draft Budget 2024/25 on 12 December 2023 at an extra meeting held in private session, which the Cabinet and other councillors had attended.

**80. PLACE DELIVERY STRATEGY FOR EPPING FOREST DISTRICT**

Councillor N Bedford, Place Portfolio Holder, introduced the report on behalf of the Leader. The purpose of developing a Place Delivery Strategy for Epping Forest District was to provide a 'high-level' corporate framework which would draw on a range of existing plans and strategies in order to support the delivery of the Council's ambitions through the use of its land and property holdings. It provided the opportunity moving forward to inform the development of other plans and strategies which were relevant to the use of those land and property assets whether they were within its direct ownership or through its delivery arm Qualis. It also provided the opportunity to influence how other public bodies made use of their own property and land assets within the district to support the achievement of the Council's objectives and priorities.

A summary of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments was provided in the agenda report. It was noted that in response to a member of the public's enquiry, recommendation (4) below would give the flexibility to recognise and amend minor changes to the Place Delivery Strategy by means of delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

**Decision:**

- (1) That the Cabinet noted the comments made by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 21 November 2023 together with the officer response.
- (2) That the Cabinet endorsed the Place Delivery Strategy for Epping Forest District as a strategic framework for informing the Council's approach to managing and using its land and property assets (including through Qualis as a wholly owned company) and working in

partnership with other public bodies to secure positive outcomes for the community of Epping Forest District.

- (3) That the Cabinet endorsed the next steps of developing an Action Plan for the creation of Place Plans as set out in the Place Delivery Strategy for Epping Forest District.
- (4) That the Cabinet delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, any minor changes to the Place Delivery Strategy as may be required following its consideration by the Council's Cabinet.

## 81. **QUALIS 4-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN - 2024 TO 2028**

Councillor J Philip, Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, reported that only a 1-Year Business Plan had been provided last year as longer-term planning had been especially difficult at that time due to huge economic uncertainty caused by national and international events. The 1-Year Business Plan was framed within the 4-Year Business Plan and Qualis was seeking the Council's permission to adopt this as its direction and focus. The six key drivers for the Plan period were detailed in the report at 3.6. It was important to drive down debt to a more sustainable level. The Qualis Group Managing Director and Interim Finance Director were also attending the meeting to answer any questions.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse asked about the importance of the future pipeline development schemes and the risk if there were less pipeline schemes and similarly if there were more opportunities expected? Also, was recruitment retention a risk over the Business Plan period or any other risks? The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder replied that if business deviated from the Business Plan work had been done to identify the risks, and if there were fewer schemes in the pipeline, there would be less borrowing and less profit and therefore, was reasonably challenging over the next four years. Recruitment and retention at Qualis were in line with what the Council expected. In addition, Brian Johnson had been appointed as the new Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Qualis Group Board. S Jevans, Group Managing Director and Executive Director continued that Qualis Solutions Ltd had an attractive recruitment approach. Councillor D Wixley added that this question had been asked at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 November and was available to view on the webcast. In reply to a query from Councillor Jon Whitehouse if we came in under the pipeline, the Portfolio Holder replied there were always unknowns, but he firmly stood behind the Business Plan and had confidence in it. The Risk Register was regularly reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee and Qualis had their own scrutiny committee.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

### **Decision:**

That the Cabinet noted the comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved the 4 Year Qualis Business Plan.

## 82. **QUALIS QUARTER 4 (YEAR 4) 2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder introduced the quarterly monitoring report and reported that at the end of quarter 4 we were not expecting everything to be optimistic. The Interim Finance Director, A Howarth, had provided a

very detailed Qualis Board monitoring report for quarter 4 – effectively the year end position (Appendix A). The company financial performance was positive and good news.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

**Decision:**

That the Cabinet noted the comments received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agreed that no additional actions were required.

**83. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**(a) Draft Budget 2024/25 (including General Fund & HRA revenue & capital, Fees & Charges, and an updated Medium-Term Financial Plan)**

The report detailed the General Fund element of the draft Budget for 2024/25 that comprised Net Expenditure of £17.929 million and Funding included assumed Government grants of £1.514 million (“Core Spending Power + 3.0%”). It also included a contribution of £0.263 million towards the replenishment of the adopted contingency balance within the General Fund Reserve.

The HRA draft Budget for 2024/25 anticipated a planned deficit of £0.465 million (funded from surplus HRA balances).

The General Fund Programme comprised a total expenditure of £61.806 million over the five years, including £33.496 million in 2024/25. In addition, the HRA Programme comprised total expenditure of £140.424 million over the five years, including £33.087 million in 2024/25.

The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder reported that a useful meeting had been held with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 December when the draft budget had been reviewed in great detail on some difficult decisions. Costs had increased significantly, so the Council knew this draft budget would be challenging and he thanked the 151 Officer and the Interim Chief Financial Officer for their work. With this structural budget, the Council had to move to a place where Council spending matched its income. An error in the report under General Fund was noted at 2.1 that: *The updated General Fund Capital Programme of £53.913 million presented in October 2023, included an indicative capital requirement of £40.996 million for 2024/25 based on progress against the adopted 2023/24 Programme (at the Quarter 2 stage) and other emerging intelligence.* The budget would be updated over the coming month as the final Draft Budget 2024/25 would go to the Cabinet on 5 February 2024.

The Leader also thanked all the officers who had been involved in the budget process. Councillor C Whitbread continued that Epping Forest District Council was a fit and lean council and therefore, it was harder to make savings, so the Council was fit for the future. Shared services and working in partnerships with other local authorities all helped to make savings and reduce costs.

Councillor S Kane asked about the miscellaneous income which included Qualis and if the net income for Qualis would be £2 million again. The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder replied that loans to Qualis were fixed term loans in general. The 151 Officer added that Qualis would still require some extra funding to complete on the delivery of current schemes, so the loan value might increase

fractionally as could interest but was reflected in this draft budget on where the Council and Qualis expected borrowing rates to be. Councillor S Kane commented that with this £2 million revenue stream coming in alongside a potential 3% rise in Council Tax, in revenue terms, what did that 3% represent in comparison to the £2 million? The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder replied the 3% Council Tax rise equated to £300,000 which was a lot less than £2 million.

Councillor N Bedford queried if the draft budget would bring the Council back up to £4 million in reserves. The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder replied that the £4 million reserves figure had been set by the 151 Officer for a number of years and the Council would continue to do what it could to get back to having the right amount of reserves.

Councillor R Brookes was reassured by the Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder that the Council was not near bankruptcy. The Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder replied that the section 114 notice did not mean a local authority would go bankrupt, but it limited what that local authority could spend. This Council was well run. There would be challenges. By prioritising what it did, being prudent now and balancing the budget, the Council would continue to run its services and community hub.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

**Decision:**

- (1) That the Cabinet considered the draft General Fund revenue budget proposals for 2024/25 (Appendix A), specifically including supplementary confidential items Annex 2 (Cost Centre Summary) and Appendix F (Savings Proposals).
- (2) That the Cabinet considered the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue budget proposals for 2024/25 (Appendix B).
- (3) That the Cabinet considered the draft General Fund and HRA capital proposals for 2024/25 through to 2028/29 (Appendix C).
- (4) That the Cabinet considered the draft Fees and Charges proposals for 2024/25 (Appendix D).
- (5) That the Cabinet considered and approved the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (General Fund and HRA) (Appendix E); and
- (6) That the Cabinet requested that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 (Appendix A) and associated documents (Appendices B to F) and make comments for consideration at the Cabinet meeting on 5th February 2024.

**84. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Decision:**

It was noted that the exclusion of the Public and Press was not required during the consideration of the Draft Budget 2024/25, as (Appendix A) Annex 2 and Appendix F were not specifically questioned.

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C-037-2023-24**

**Date of meeting: 15 January 2024**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Housing and Property (Cllr Holly Whitbread)**

**Subject: Emergency Alarm Upgrade – Update**

**Responsible Officer: Surjit Balu - Interim Director for Housing & Property**

**Democratic Services: Vivienne Messenger:  
email: [DemocraticServices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)**

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

**Recommendation 1** - To note that the Council are working with TSA (Telecare Services Association) the representative body for technology enabled care (TEC) services to procure a new emergency alarm system for the Council's independent living schemes and, designated dwellings for older people in the community following the termination of the contract with Doro & Everon in January 2023

**Recommendation 2** -To note the alarm monitoring contract with Tunstall Response is due for renewal in 2025, and a that a tender exercise is underway to procure new emergency alarm systems and alarm monitoring service for the Council's independent living schemes and designated dwellings for older people in the community, to ensure work is completed in readiness for the digital switchover in 2025.

### **Report**

#### **1. Aim of Report**

1.1 To inform Cabinet of a revised plan to the meet the requirements of the switchover for emergency alarm equipment, in independent living schemes and designated dwellings from existing analogue to digital signal.

#### **2. Background**

2.1 The Council must upgrade the emergency alarm system in their independent living schemes due to analogue telephone lines being discontinued by November 2025. At present the emergency alarm system in our schemes operates on the public switched telephone network (PSTN) which is analogue. This network is being discontinued as we move to a digital IP network. This will also impact older people living in the community who we currently provide a dispersed alarm to. In addition, the current emergency alarm monitoring contract with Tunstall Response is due to expire in 2025. This means that we must also procure a new monitoring provider for our emergency alarm systems.

2.2 During a Cabinet meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> In January 2022, Members agreed to appoint Doro & Everon via a Framework agreement to upgrade the emergency alarm system in our

independent living schemes. We entered into a contract with Doro & Everon in March 2022 with work on the emergency alarm upgrade due to commence in May 2022. Despite our best efforts, no emergency alarm equipment was installed. Various reasons were given including Covid and difficulty sourcing components. At the beginning of November 2022 action was taken to bring the contract with Doro & Everon to an end, following various meetings, the contract was terminated in January 2023.

- 2.3 The alarm equipment in our independent living schemes operates on the public switched telephone network (PSTN). There is a national program of work for telecommunication providers to move to an IP network by November 2025. (Analogue to digital).
- 2.4 The current emergency alarm equipment in our schemes is around 20 years old, although it still provides a reliable service it has limitations in that we can only link pendants and smoke detectors to the system. To ensure the alarm systems continue to provide a reliable service and meet the needs of our residents now and in the future, we need to upgrade to digital systems. Furthermore, our emergency alarm contract with Tunstall Response comes to an end in 2025 so it makes sense to procure a new provider for both the emergency alarm system and emergency alarm monitoring service at the same time. This is so that as each scheme/dispersed alarm is upgraded it can be linked to the new provider.
- 2.5 Following the termination of the contract with Doro & Everon, we approached TSA (Telecare Services Association). TSA is the representative body for technology enabled care (TEC) services of which we are members, to seek their assistance and draw on their knowledge in procuring new emergency alarm systems and alarm monitoring provider.
- 2.6 TSA undertook a stock condition survey of our existing alarm equipment and produced a comprehensive report which includes recommendations for upgrading along with average costings for the various options available. (See resource implications).
- 2.7 To ensure value for money and equipment that is fit for purpose TSA have recommended hard wired alarm upgrades for our independent living schemes of which there are seven in total and dispersed alarm units for our grouped independent living schemes of which there are also seven in total and dispersed alarms for properties in the community of which there are around 160. Hard wired alarm systems require a degree of cabling to be run throughout the building and have a life expectancy of around 15 – 20 years, whereas a dispersed alarm requires no cabling, works on a sim card, and is plugged into an electric socket within the property, the life expectancy of a dispersed alarm is around 8 – 10 years. Peripherals can be programmed to both hard wired and dispersed alarm systems, allowing residents to remain independent for as long as possible. Some examples of peripherals include fall detector, medication reminder, flood detector, property exit sensors.
- 2.8 Five alarm providers were invited to undertake a presentation and demonstrate their alarm equipment at a supplier event being held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Leonard Davis House, our independent living scheme in North Weald. The purpose of this event is to get a good cross section of suppliers in attendance to help us obtain a better understanding of the market and assist us in drawing up a specification for tender.
- 2.9 We undertook consultation with residents in September 2023 in the form of emergency alarm surgeries, around 38 residents from our independent living schemes had expressed an interest in attending the supplier event on 25<sup>th</sup> October.
- 2.10 Following the supplier event, work will commence on drawing up specifications for the emergency alarm upgrades and the procurement of a new emergency alarm monitoring provider, with a tender exercise taking place through a Framework agreement around



December 2023 with a view to the emergency alarm upgrades commencing May 2024 to ensure completion before November 2025.

### 3. Options considered and rejected:

- 3.1 The option to make modifications to the existing alarm system in our independent living schemes was considered but rejected due to the limitations of the existing system and the need to move from analogue to digital. We also need to ensure we have a digital solution that enables our residents to live independently for as long as possible.
- 3.2 The dispersed alarms currently installed in council properties in the community are analogue therefore these must also be upgraded to digital.
- 3.3 The monitoring contract with Tunstall will end in 2025, therefore we have no option but to undertake a procurement exercise to secure a monitoring provider so if residents activate their alarm, the call will be answered, and the appropriate action taken.

### 4. Resource Implications:

- 4.1 Capital funding is required for this project. £360,000 has already been allocated for the upgrade for 2023/24. This will be carried forward to next financial year. A further £36,000 has been allocated for 2024/25. In addition, there is also £50,000 2024/5 budget provision for the alarm monitoring contract.
- 4.2 It's important to note the final cost will be dependent on whether we opt for a hard-wired emergency alarm system, dispersed alarm, or a mix of both. TSA have given us average costs along with their recommendations. See table below:

Independent Living Scheme	TSA Recommendation	Average Cost
Buckhurst Court	Hard Wired	48,200.00
Frank Bretton House	Hard Wired	25,445.00
Hyde Mead House	Hard Wired	25,445.00
Jubilee Court	Hard Wired	34,626.00
Leonard Davis House	Hard Wired	36,115.00
Chapel Road	Hard Wired & Dispersed Units	39,368.00
Grove Court	Dispersed Alarms	5,000
Pelly Court	Dispersed Alarms	32,225.00
Rochford Ave/Roundhills	Dispersed Alarms	18,750.00
Hedgers Close	Dispersed Alarms	4,000
Jessopp Court	Hard Wired	30,035.00
Parsonage Court	Hard Wired	35,450.00
The Spinney	Dispersed Alarms	6,000
Watermans Way	Dispersed Alarms	7,000
160 Properties in the community	Dispersed Alarms	40,000
		<b>£387,659 (Total)</b>

### 5. Legal and Governance Implications:

- 5.1 This proposal meets all current requirements.

**6. Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

6.1 None

**7. Consultation Undertaken:**

7.1 Consultation with residents at our independent living schemes took place on 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September. Officers visited all schemes and held alarm upgrade surgeries giving resident's the opportunity to gain some understanding of the emergency alarm upgrade and the opportunity to ask questions.

**8. Background Papers:**

8.1 None

**9. Risk Management:**

9.1 We are working with TSA to reduce risk and ensure the appropriate alarm systems are procured. In addition, projects of this nature are developed and managed under a project management system which includes risk management.

**10. Equality**

10.1 An equality assessment has been completed.

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-038-2023/24

**Date of meeting:** 15 January 2024



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Contracts, Service Delivery, and Improvements (Cllr Ray Balcombe)

**Subject:** Procurement of Waste Fleet Vehicles

**Responsible Officer:** James Warwick, Service Director, Contracts, Partnerships and Procurement ([jwarwick@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:jwarwick@eppingforestdc.gov.uk))

**Democratic Services Officer:** V Messenger ([democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk))

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

- (1) That Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) award an 8-year contract hire and vehicle maintenance agreement to Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) to provide EFDC with vehicles and the maintenance of provided vehicles within the agreed financial cap which can be found in restricted Appendix A.
- (2) Officers and advisers are instructed to finalise negotiations with SFS with a view to placing an order by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 subject to Leader, Portfolio Holder, and Section 151 Officer approval.

### **Executive Summary:**

The fleet of vehicles used by our current waste contractor is not owned by EFDC and will be unavailable for use when the current contract expires later this year. For EFDC to manage its statutory duties in relation to domestic and commercial waste collections from November 2024, we must procure a new fleet of vehicles.

Contract hire as opposed to the outright purchase of vehicles is the preferred method of procurement. An independent financial advisor supported EFDC to determine the preferred route of contract hire based on EFDC's requirements.

Contract hire provides for:

- Greater flexibility to switch and change vehicles to fit the changing requirements of the waste service
- The ability to introduce greener, cleaner vehicles when it is both affordable and practicable to do so
- Available vehicles ready for the start of operations in November 2024
- The ability to right size the number of vehicles throughout the life of the contract ensuring value for money and that the very best use is made of all resources
- The ability to include the maintenance and servicing of vehicles within one more cost-effective agreement
- Vehicle maintenance to take place at the Operations Hub at North Weald Airfield maximising vehicle availability
- EFDC to include the disposal of vehicles within the agreement

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The reason for the proposed decision is to ensure EFDC can maintain and appropriately manage its statutory duties around domestic and commercial waste collections and has vehicles ready for operation in November 2024.

## **Other Options for Action:**

### **Outright purchase of vehicles**

This option was rejected following a detailed options appraisal and external financial advice based on EFDC's requirements.

An earlier options paper considered the two routes to market; outright purchase versus contract hire.

While outright purchase of vehicles provides cheaper long-term costs if the vehicles last for many years, waste vehicles typically only last for 8 years. Outright purchase of vehicles also increases the risk of not having vehicles ready for operation in November 2024 due to delays in manufacturing. Contract hire ensures that the contract hire vehicle company has to provide EFDC vehicles ready for operations in November 2024, as the contract hire will provide temporary vehicles for the start of operations in November 2024 if the vehicles that are being manufactured for the contract are delayed.

## **Report:**

1. A Prior Information Notice was issued on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023, this was published on the Find a Tender Website and was available publicly, inviting any supplier/s to engage with us in a Soft Market Test and help us to shape our future requirement. EFDC opened a tender box for two weeks, closing on 21/06/23, and received three replies, from Dawson Group, Hako Machines and Specialist Fleet Services. All three responses specifically mentioned the Halton Housing Framework as a potential route to market for us. The use of this framework was subsequently explored, evaluated and agreed for use.
2. EFDC issued an Invitation to Tender document on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to the six suppliers listed on the Halton Housing Framework Lot 2. This was a 2-stage process, in that EFDC asked for an initial submission of pricing and some of the quality questions on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, to enable the Waste Client Team to assess the initial pricing and make decisions on types of vehicles (ICE vs Electric, for example) and then reissue a final set of requirements to the bidders on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Bidders were then given a week to make any final adjustments to their pricing schedules based on EFDC's final requirement and return on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
3. At the close of Phase 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, EFDC received a bid. Of the companies that did not bid, only one provided feedback as to why they chose not to take part; this company said they would not be able to supply, maintain and service all the vehicles that were required. EFDC continued with the process as outlined above and issued our final requirement on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, receiving a final bid back from SFS on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
4. The quality elements of their bid were evaluated by officers from EFDC and Optimum Professional Solutions (OPS) and a moderation meeting was held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Chaired by EFDC's Procurement and Contracts Team Manager.

The scores of the SFS bid were as follows:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Score</b>
Suitability of Vehicles	5/5
Vehicle maintenance and servicing provision	4/5
Vehicle delivery	4/5
Contract Management, Customer Service and Performance Management	4/5
Sustainability & Social Value	4/5

5. All panel members agreed that the quality elements of SFS bid were very good, and a detailed and robust tender had been provided to EFDC. Further work was undertaken to benchmark the submitted bid within the current waste vehicle market to test whether the bid represented good value for money. EFDC was provided with anonymised data from another public body who had recently been out to tender, which is comparable to the submission received from SFS. SFS are the number 1 ranked supplier on the Framework (which would allow a direct award if desired) and have an excellent track record with similar contracts.

6. Control over the physical deployment of EFDC's Waste fleet was also a further important consideration. Typically achieved through telematics analysis and fuel management modelling, this can be technically demanding for a large fleet, and relationships with a contract hire company partner can help to reduce or remove significant pressures. This can clearly save on costs associated with management/analytical time and supporting technologies.

7. SFS have stated that savings could be realised by EFDC if the Council is willing to slightly flex its requirements around performance management, payment terms, risk on inflation and third party works. These options are currently being explored by EFDC.

### **Scrutiny Comments**

N/A

### **Resource Implications:**

This report asks for permission to award an 8-year contract hire contract to SFS within a capped annual spend that can be found in restricted Appendix A.

Final contract figures are to be finalised following negotiations with SFS (hence the restriction on Appendix A where the annual financial cap can be found). Final approval must be sought from the Leader, Portfolio Holder and Section 151 Officer prior to awarding the contract.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

Anthony Collins Solicitors Ltd are providing legal advice, support and drafting all contract documentation.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

As part of the procurement process all environmentally friendly options have been considered and alternative fuel types have been considered wherever feasible. There are several viable alternative fuel types available. EV technology is not yet offering comparable performance or affordability to warrant switching whole fleets of vehicles, especially Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs) or specialist machines (eg medium and large sweepers). EFDC will be getting some electric vehicles as part of the proposed contract and there will be the opportunity to change more to alternative fuels if technology develops during the contract period. Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil

(HVO) is a potential good diesel substitute which delivers carbon savings of 80-90% compared to diesel with no impact on vehicle warranties.

**Consultation / Scrutiny Undertaken:**

N/A

**Background Papers:**

Cabinet Report March 2023

**Risk Management:**

Failure to place the order in February 2024 could mean the vehicles are not ready for November 2024. SFS bid guarantees we will have vehicles ready to use in November 2024 if orders are placed by 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2024.

**Equality:**

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out and there was no significant impact.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted