

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Thursday, 1st February, 2007

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Simon Hill, Senior Democratic Services Officer
email: shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel: 01992 564249

Members:

Councillors R Morgan (Chairman), Mrs J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman), D Bateman, M Cohen, M Colling, R D'Souza, Mrs H Harding, P House, G Mohindra, Mrs P Richardson and M Woollard

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

A PRE – MEETING FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD AT 7.00PM

WEBCASTING NOTICE

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- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). To report the appointment of any

substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 36)

Decisions required:

To confirm the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 9 November, 7 December 2006 and 9 January 2007.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN THE EPPING FOREST DISTRICT - PRESENTATION.

Recommendation:

To receive an update from Lonica Vanclay, the Local Commissioner for Children's and Young Peoples' Services in the District.

The Committee received an initial presentation from Lonica Vanclay at its meeting on 31 August 2006. She explained the Government's vision for Children's Services was set out in the Green Paper "Every Child Matters" published in September 2003 and that the Department for Education and Skills had produced non statutory guidance on the role of District Council's in improving outcomes for children. A copy of that guidance was attached to the agenda for 31 August meeting.

Ms Vanclay set out the County's proposed response to the Green Paper, the role of the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP), proposed changes to the structure and its links to the wider community especially the Local Strategic Partnership. The Committee noted the presentation and invited Ms Vanclay to come back in six months to give an update. That is the purpose of this presentation.

Things have moved fairly quickly since August. The structure of the CYPSP has been reviewed and Council at its meeting on 19 December 2006 appointed Councillors Mrs Grigg and Mrs Haigh to be its Member level representatives. They are supported at the CYPSP by the Joint Chief Executive, John Scott, who has also been asked to serve on the CYPSP Co-ordinating Group.

Officers from other Council Services (Housing and Leisure) serve on CYPSP Sub Groups.

At the same time meetings are taking place on the development of Children's Centres across the District and some Members are attending those meetings in a personal capacity, although it seems likely the District Council will be invited to have formal representation. However, this is a matter for later consideration.

Lonica Vanclay will bring Members up-to-date on the development of Children's Services within the District.

6. BUDGET 2007/08 (Pages 37 - 42)

To consider the attached report.

7. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING (Pages 43 - 52)

To note the updated work plan.

The Committee has stressed that this item should focus on new issues not reported elsewhere on the agenda, work carried out since the last meeting of the Committee, or any other significant issue requiring the Committee's attention. Accordingly, Panel Chairmen are reminded of the need to restrict their progress reports to such issues.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL AND MEMBERS SERVICES STANDING PANEL - REVIEW OF CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL DELEGATION.

Recommendation:

To authorise the Constitutional and Members Services Standing Panel to report direct to the Council in February 2007 on its review of Contract Standing Orders and Financial Delegation

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). The Constitutional and Members Services Standing Panel will be completing its review of Contract Standing Orders and Financial Delegation at its meeting on 8 February 2007. It would assist the Councils from the point of view of inspection by the Audit Commission if the review was completed by the financial year 2006/07. This will mean adoption by the Council on 20 February 2007. To achieve this deadline, authority is sought for the Panel to report direct to the February 2007 Council meeting.

9. CABINET REVIEW

Recommendation:

To consider any items to be raised by the Chairman at the Cabinet meeting on 5 February 2007.

Members are reminded to bring to the meeting their copy of the Cabinet agenda.

10. 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.

Confidential Items Commencement: Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed to exclude the public and press.
- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers: Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution 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 (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Thursday, 9 November 2006
Place:	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	7.30 - 9.55 pm
Members Present:	Councillors R Morgan (Chairman) Mrs J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman) D Bateman, M Cohen, M Colling, Mrs H Harding, P House and Mrs P Richardson		
Other Councillors:	Councillors Mrs P Smith, Mrs D Collins, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs A Haigh, A Lee, Mrs S Perry, Mrs M Sartin, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou and C Whitbread		
Apologies:	Councillors G Mohindra and M Woollard		
Officers Present:	J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), J Gilbert (Head of Environmental Services), I Willett (Head of Research and Democratic Services), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant) and G Lunnun (Democratic Services Manager)		
By Invitation:	J Slater (Waltham Forest PCT), A Clark (Barking and Dagenham PCT), A Thomas (West Essex Primary Care Trust) and C O'Connell (West Essex Primary Care Trust)		

44. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Committee noted that the meeting would be webcast.

45. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee noted that Councillor Mrs Smith was substituting for Councillor Mohindra.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Code of Conduct for Members Councillors Stallan and Haigh declared a personal interest in item 8 – Review of Civic Ceremonial. The Councillors indicated that they proposed to stay in the meeting for the discussion for that item.

47. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2006 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

48. "FIT FOR THE FUTURE" REVIEW OF NORTH EAST LONDON HEALTH SERVICES

The Chairman welcomed James Slater, Director of Primary Care and Deputy Chief Executive of Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust (PCT) to the meeting. Mr Slater was also the lead director on the 'Fit for The Future' review of northeast London health care currently being undertaken by the North East London Strategic Health Authority.

Also present were Mr Alan Clarke of the Barking and Dagenham PCT, Aidan Thomas, the newly appointed Chief Executive of the West Essex PCT and Ms Catherine O'Connell Locality Director, West Essex PCT.

Mr Slater gave a presentation on the proposed review. Mr Slater began by thanking members for the opportunity of discussing the review with the Council. Mr Slater stressed that the review work was still ongoing and currently at pre-consultation stages.

There was an acknowledgement by clinical leaders that services at Whipps Cross Hospital would need to change in the future. The 'Fit for the Future' review was a collaboration by the PCT and the SHA and other partner organisations. The four London boroughs that made up North East London: Havering, Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge defined what was meant by North East London.

The aim of the programme was to improve the quality and suitability of local health services and to address the differences in Health Care across the area, to provide more services to the community, to get the best from the new Queens Hospital in Romford and to bring the local health services into financial balance in the longer term. This was a significant task as the two acute trusts were currently in a deficit position of approximately £50 million. Finance was not the only reason for the review but the authorities did have a duty to live within their means.

Why change? Technology was changing the way that patient care was provided and more investment in community based facilities meant that care could be provided outside of hospitals. Improvements in treatment meant that patients could be treated more quickly and hospital stays minimised. More increasingly patients were treated as day cases or treated in their own homes. Patients requiring specialist care had better outcomes when treated in major centres. Mr Slater gave an example of treatment of heart attack patients being treated at the London Chest Hospital in Mile End rather than local Accident and Emergency (A and E) Services as this gave them the highest possible survival rate. This was largely permitted by changes in technology and training of paramedics.

Mr Slater commented that the PCT's were investing in diagnostic facilities in Health Services and Community based blood testing. Eight new Primary Care Centres had been built or refurbished. Work was being done to minimise the length of hospital stays.

The Committee noted that the review was considering five options. Mr Slater stressed that no decisions had been made on the review and would not until extensive public involvement and consultation was completed. Additionally, the programme was being taken in the context of a larger review of the London Health Strategy. The options were in pre-consultation stages.

The committee noted that presentations had been made to local authorities and patient and public involvement forums. A number of stakeholder workshops were also being held to examine the criteria of and to assess the options and were attended both by clinicians and community representative groups.

Epping Forest was an important part of their 'peripheral' community and the PCT were aware of patient flows from the south of the district accessing services in North East London.

It was noted that the following services would stay at Whipps Cross Hospital regardless of the outcome of the review:

- An Urgent Care centre
- Maternity Services
- Outpatients services
- Diagnostic Facilities; and
- Day surgery

Under all the options proposed, the new hospital in Romford would open. This was being provided via a 20 year Private Finance Initiative (PFI). This would also provide a base for regional specialties. Additionally, a new Independent Sector Treatment Centre (ISTC) on King Georges site would also open.

Therefore the options being considered were:

Option 1: Queen's Hospital as major acute hospital, Whipps Cross and King George Hospitals to remain as a district general hospitals (DGHs), with an Independent Sector Treatment Centre (ISTC) at King George Hospital;

Options 2&3: One emergency-focused hospital and one elective-focused hospital i.e. splitting of elective and emergency work either at Whipps Cross or King Georges Hospitals) – this was thought to be a radical solution.

Options 4&5: One District General Hospital (DGH) and one ambulatory centre. (i.e. leaving one as a District General Hospital and other into an ambulatory centre – this meant as a community hospital providing outpatient and diagnostic day case work but no in-patient beds either at Whipps Cross or King Georges Hospitals).

The following options had been excluded:

- Maternity and neonatal services on an elective-focused site (Clinical Reference Group – CRG)
- An Option which required all births other than low risk ones to be cared for in one unit at new Queen's Hospital (CRG);
- An Option for stand-alone women's and children's hospital at King George Hospital site (CRG);
- An Option for single-bedded site (new Queen's Hospital).

It was noted that the following criteria were being used to judge the options:

- Quality - to improve the quality of services;
- Access (travel) - to minimise travelling times for patients;
- Capacity - to provide sufficient physical capacity;
- Facilities - to provide a high standard of facilities;
- Workforce - to support a developing and motivated staff;
- Deliverability – to deliver changes as quickly as possible.

The Health Authority was working on a three to five year plan to implement the review results. Formal consultation would follow the pre-consultation process including the involvement of patients, the public and professionals to improve the consultation process. A formal consultation paper would be issued in early 2007 and a three-month formal consultation period would follow before the secretary of state determined proposals.

Comments on the options were invited via email or comment forms. Up to date information would also be published via the PCT websites.

The committee posed the following questions:

(1) The district population was around 120,000 people and at least half of those people accessed services at Whipps Cross hospital and this was increasing both for accident and emergency and outpatients – why was West Essex PCT not involved in the review team from the start and why were local representatives not invited to workshops in the autumn?

Mr Slater responded that one of the first things he had done on appointment was to meet with Aidan Thomas, Chief Executive of the West Essex PCT, also Mr Slater had visited the Chief Executive of the Council. He assured members that the management consultants that were analysing data for the capacity model had factored in activity at Whipps Cross hospital including that from residents of Epping Forest. In terms of involvement in the workshops, the view had been taken that the SHA would initially work with those Local Authorities directly in the area during the pre-consultation phase. It was the case that the new PCT's in Essex had been provided with papers from the steering group and the project team.

(2) Councillors in the district were not aware of the proposals until the morning of a meeting at the Hawkey Hall recently, the perception was that most of Whipps Cross was going to closed. Is the A and E service to be continued? There was also the perception the A and E department at King Georges was to close?

In response, Mr Slater stated that the PCT had not been invited to the public meetings and did not contribute to them. He was aware that some things had been said at those meetings that were factually untrue and were seeking to put that right. Any presentation made to Council's, groups or MP's had been the same as the Committee had received, any different view was a matter of their perception. The PCT did understand the importance of the hospital to the community. In regard to the options, option 1 proposed three A and E centres, options 2-5 envisaged two A and E centres. If those options were chosen there would need to be a decision made about where the A and E services would be provided. The needs of people surrounding Whipps Cross, including those from Epping Forest, would be factored into the deliberations. Mr Slater expressed his wish that through meetings like this Committee that they could seek to address this confusion.

(3) How can you reassure our residents that services are going to be available and maintained at a distance that was appropriate to them? When using external consultants, how much weight was given to this?

In response, Mr Slater indicated that it was the local PCT who purchased care and there was a debate to be had with the local West Essex PCT about that healthcare and what they wanted to purchase. As part of the analysis every attendance to A and E departments had been looked at to see where it had originated. The NHS as a whole had a duty to achieve targets set them by government, but there was a view

expressed by urgent care centres that acknowledged people came to hospitals seeking care and that services that met those needs should be provided. However half of those attending A and E actually had a primary care issue rather than a need for emergency services. The review would consider those issues and the PCT was listening to those concerns as part of the process. He apologised that West Essex had not been involved sooner.

Mr Thomas stated that the new West Essex PCT had been concerned that they had not been involved in the discussions at an earlier point. He had now met with Mr Slater and was aware that the review was at an early stage, but he felt that the PCT were able to engage now in a way that was more meaningful. However, something had to happen with the hospital services in this part of London. There were reviews going on in Hertfordshire, and the whole of eastern England. Another problem was the poor condition of the buildings at Whipps Cross hospital. The entirety of the Eastern England NHS was facing financial problems so the current configuration of the NHS couldn't continue. Additionally, the current hospital capacity needed to be looked at as there was a continuing trend of moving services out of the hospitals and this was the right answer for Epping Forest because of the local transport issues. This had the knock-on effect that hospitals didn't then get the money to run services. Both hospitals had significant deficits. The PCT had yet to form its view on the proposals but they would be thinking very carefully about the need for A and E services for the public and working closely on the consultation over the next few months. He encouraged the Council and members to get involved in the debate.

(4) The district is served by another hospital, that being Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) in Harlow, was this review being coordinated with the other reviews?

Mr Thomas responded that PAH had a number of pressures (i.e. increases in services that might occur) and some threats (i.e. reduction in activity). There was a review of acute care in Hertfordshire and if it concluded in the way thought, then PAH would have an increased catchment area. Additionally, there were proposals for housing growth along the M11 corridor that were still under consideration and together with this review, there could be an impact on PAH. On the negative side, there were independent treatment centre proposals which, whilst good for patients, would mean that diagnostics and treatments would be available from those centres in competition with PAH.

The PCT were attempting, as the main local purchaser of health care, to plan appropriately. This also applied to PAH. Mr Thomas stated that there was presently a piecemeal approach and it was the role of the new PCT to bring this together properly.

(5) What reassurance could you give about patient transport issues?

Mr Slater indicated that the analysis was using the London Ambulance Service in journey mapping but not the Essex services. They were quite clear on the need to get the whole system right including access to services. The increasing speciality of services meant that thought needed to be given to access problems to those sites. There may not be easy answers to those issues.

(6) We understand that all of the A and E Services are heavily used, the review options 2-5 reduce these to two – how can two A and E departments cope with the work formally carried out by four? Can overstretched GP services pick up the demand?

Mr Slater responded that part of the issue was that changing the way that patient's needs were provided. A significant number of people that turned up at A and E did not need emergency services intervention. The intention was to 'work smarter' by providing GP's and specialist nurses to provide a better more appropriate services and freeing up specialist A and E doctors for emergency care. Although those options envisaged two A and E departments, on the third site there would still be an urgent care centre.

(7) Under the East of England Development Plan, the southern part of the district could have up to 3,500 new homes, therefore these hospitals became even more important at that point as there are no other plans to build new hospitals. Also we have a number of people on low incomes and elderly so it is difficult to get to Oldchurch Hospital from Chigwell or Loughton so they favoured Whipps Cross and King Georges.

Mr Slater responded that there was no expectations that people from Waltham Forest or Epping Forest would have to go to Oldchurch Hospital for their care. Patient choice meant that they were allowed to choose where their care was delivered. It was the case that in Waltham Forest for example that people choose their treatment to be delivered at North Mids Hospital outside of the review area.

In terms of the East of England plans, the Thames Gateway plan also envisaged a large number of houses that were being considered as part of the review. The view had been taken that no further DGH's should be provided but that services on existing sites should work better.

(8) Under the options it was envisaged that A and E services would not be provided at all sites, however, emergency situations could happen even with the most minor procedures – How would such care be provided? Why were the trusts in deficit?

Mr Slater responded that the specialist services did bring together practitioners in a team that could respond to emergency incidents. Technology meant that some procedures that couldn't have been offered previously now could. The paramedic ambulance model meant that more emphasis was given to stabilising the patient and then transporting them to a centre of excellence rather than getting them to the nearest facilities as soon as possible.

Mr Clarke indicated that the point about the inherent risk of the separation of emergency care from planned care was well made and that this point should be built into the evaluation of the options.

In terms of the deficits, Mr Slater reported that from the PCT perspective, the building of the Primary Care Centres had been expensive and were an additional demand on the PCT's resources, but better buildings resulted in better care and more services, but that was managed within budgets. The PCT had overspent but this was entirely due to too much emergency activity at Whipps Cross, i.e. a failure to deal with issues before they got to that point. It was his view that many of the deficits of trusts were historical, hidden year on year by the use of non-recurrent monies to hide the gap. Through a change in NHS accounting procedures and the replacement of block contracts with the principle that the money followed the patient, the financial situation had now become very apparent.

(9) How long would it be before the proper costings of the options are available? And what sort of timetable will there be on the options?

Mr Slater responded that, in any event, the costings would have to show that the option was affordable. It was hoped to have these by the end of November 2006. These would be shared with the Council and this committee. It was hoped that consultation papers would be available in the early New Year with a view to a three-month consultation leading into the second quarter of 2007. It was hoped individual boards would consider the options in November/December 2007.

With permission of the Chairman, members of the Public asked the following questions

(1) D Paddon – Loughton – The public fear was that by the time of the official consultation, the options would have been narrowed down to one that wasn't liked at all. It was hoped to have more than one option to support. It appeared from the material that bringing about change in the hospital sector was something that was hoped to be done quickly, but a lot of what was being proposed seemed to depend heavily on improvements in community medicine, in intermediate treatment centres, in GP surgeries and all the community side of the health service, how would these improvements in healthcare be achieved as one or more of the hospitals was run down?

Mr Slater responded that in terms of the options, they were open minded about how many options would be part of the formal paper. He encouraged the submission of views at this stage. The point made about community care was valid, Fit for the Future was a review of the whole system and another review was taking place on the out of hospital systems. This pre-consultation was solely about acute in-patient care, but relied upon improvements in community care. Investment in community care in the past had been restricted because money was spent on A and E services and hospital care. The mistakes of 'care in the community' would not be repeated where hospital care had been curtailed on the basis that GP's and community services could pick up the care. Costings being looked at picked up the cost of providing more community care.

(2) D Paddon – Loughton – We have a number of single GP practices, they are not in the position of being able to accept a major loss in services from the hospital sector at the moment.

This was a valid point. The GP community was changing rapidly and there were fewer small practices than three years previously. In Waltham Forest collaborative working between surgeries had been encouraged and was proving very beneficial. Another of the financial reforms had introduced Practice Based Commissioning where GP's were given the opportunity of purchasing care on the patients' behalf. In practice this couldn't be done at single practice level, as it had to be done collaboratively and on planned basis. However, primary care was not just about GP's, it involved nursing teams and GP's in Waltham Forest were able to provide better managed care through those teams.

(3) R Braybrook – Buckhurst Hill – Could Epping Forest residents be assured that they would be part of the formal consultation?

Mr Slater assured that the Council, the West Essex PCT and Local residents and groups would be involved in the formal consultation. Formal consultation proposals would be informed by the meeting.

(4) D Rhodes – Chairman, Loughton Residents Association – Many residents were elderly and this was higher than the national average and many could not use

private transport, several electoral wards also scored highly on social deprivation indices. There were other deprivation areas in Waltham Forest. The loss of services at Whipps Cross hospital would double travel distances, ambulance distances would also increase. No stakeholders from the area were represented at the forums.

Mr Slater replied that they were acutely aware of the transport difficulties for the elderly. Analysis undertaken indicated that the Waltham Forest area had the lowest level of car ownership and parts of Epping Forest had similar issues. The transport difficulties were also apparent and were being taken into account in the process. The involvement of stakeholder groups had been previously determined. Views were being taken through the meeting or via the website/email.

(5) D Rhodes – Chairman, Loughton Residents Association – Was it too late to include a stakeholder from this area?

Mr Slater undertook to take this request back to explore other ways of involvement.

(6) D Linnell – Loughton Residents Association – Options 2,3 and 4 all involved the loss of services from Whipps Cross. These services would have to be provided elsewhere, possibly from Harlow, What arrangements had been put in place to make that changeover? Hospitals seem to be operating at full capacity all the time, what contingency capacity was there? (e.g. For the Olympics, a bird flu epidemic, Stansted airport, motorway accidents.) And how as this going to be discussed with the public?

Mr Slater clarified that options 1 and 4 meant status quo for Whipps Cross Hospital, other options meant changes. It was the case that option 5 would mean Whipps Cross losing its in-patient beds. In terms of major incidents, whatever was decided, it needed to be resilient and able to cope with incidents, in context, the two acute trust were running at a bed occupancy rate of 96%, the modelling was being done on the basis of three scenarios, 85%, 90% and 95%. Overuse of beds gave rise to issues about clinical safety, patient care and staff burnout. Capacity was therefore being built in. The NHS had a history of taking everything that was thrown at it.

Mr Thomas stated that until details behind the options were known, it was difficult to decide on service provision. The West Essex PCT took responsibility for having plans in place.

(7) B Roseby – Loughton resident – If West Essex residents came out with a different preferred option who would make the ultimate decision?

Mr Slater indicated that the Secretary of State had the final decision.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer reported that the Council had, today, been approached by Havering Borough Council seeking a view as to whether the Council wished to have an involvement in a proposed Joint Scrutiny Committee being set up by the four London Boroughs, Havering, Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham and Waltham Forest to look at the options in the new year. The Committee agreed that member representation on this Committee was important and asked that Council be requested to consider a formal appointment at its next meeting.

The Chairman urged members and the public to submit their views and thanked Mr Slater for his presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the full Council be requested to consider the appointment of a member representative to the proposed Joint Scrutiny Committee it's meeting in December 2006.

49. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

Progress Reports

(a) Environmental And Planning Services Standing Panel - Councillor Mrs P Smith

Councillor Smith reported that the Panel had last met on 30 October 2006.

(i) Traffic Issues in the Roydon and Nazeing Areas – Focus day

The Panel had considered the current position regarding the focus day agreed on Traffic Issues in the Roydon and Nazeing Areas. The Panel had noted that the Head of Planning and Economic Development continued to liaise with the County to find an independent facilitator for the day. The details of the event would be reported in the Members Bulletin.

(ii) East of England Plan

The recommendations of the Examination in Public for the East of England Plan were now with the Minister. It was anticipated that the proposed changes would be issued in December 2006 and would take some time to consider. It had been agreed that, to allow the Panel sufficient time to 'digest' the information, the next meeting of the Panel programmed for 19 December 2006 would be moved back to 16 January 2007 at 7.30 pm in order to consider the issue.

(iii) Community Wardens

The Panel had received feedback on the recent Member Site visit to the Community Warden Schemes operating in Colchester Borough Council and Braintree Borough Council.

The schemes observed focused more on community engagement initiatives rather than tackling environmental crime. These type of scheme were quite costly. On balance, the Panel recommended that at this point in time, a Community Warden scheme should not be pursued to deliver the relevant powers in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act (ie Fixed Penalty Notices). Instead the Panel had asked that further consideration be given to alternative methods for delivering the legislation. A full report on this matter would be submitted a future panel meeting.

(iv) Planning Enforcement Statistics

The Panel had supported a report recommending that for a trial period planning enforcement statistics should be reported in the Members Bulletin giving details of: enforcement investigations started, processed and "in hand" each month; and a brief progress report on cases where an enforcement notice had not been complied with.

It had also been agreed that the cases listed in the 'Planning Enforcement Action section' in the Members bulletin should state the date action commenced. The Panel had asked for a further report in six months on the trial.

(b) Older People and Disabled People Task and Finish Panel – Budget Proposals 2007/08 – Councillor S Perry

The Older People and Disabled People Task and Finish Panel had been meeting to discuss matters contained within its terms of reference. The Panel were now in the report preparation stages and hoped to place their report before the Committee in the New Year.

Two issues had arisen which members of the panel wished to bring to the attention of the Cabinet before the finalisation of next years budget.

Firstly the Panel had been asked by the Housing Portfolio Holder to undertake a review of the Council's Handy Person Scheme. This scheme provided retired homeowners and private tenants in the Epping Forest District with reputable contractors to carry out minor works.

The Service was free to people who were over 60, retired and on a means tested benefit (such as Council Tax Benefit and Pension Guarantee Credit) for work costing up to a maximum of £150.

In 2006/07 year the budget for this scheme had been supplemented by an additional £3,000 as its budget provision had not increased since the Scheme was first set up in 1999. This additional budget provision was fully committed this year.

The scheme provided an excellent service to the public. The panel were recommending that District Development funding be repeated for 2007/08 to enable the service to continue at current levels.

Secondly, the Panel heard of two excellent schemes run by Leisure Services, Seated Exercise and an Arts Project called 'A sense of place' which the Panel wished to request the Leisure Portfolio Holder to consider for repeat again next year.

The Committee considered recommendations of the Panel to be made to the Cabinet meeting on 13 November 2006 and agreed them accordingly.

It was noted that a subgroup of the Panel was due to meet shortly to begin the process of preparing the formal report to the Committee for the new year.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Cabinet be asked to agree to the submission of a bid for District Development Fund funding in 2007/08 in the sum of £3,000 to continue the provision of assistance to residents under the Council's Handy Person Scheme subject to consideration of the budget later in the municipal year;

(2) That the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services be asked to consider how the Seated Exercise for Elderly and Disabled and a repeat of the Arts Project 'A Sense of Place' can be funded on a district wide basis.

(c) Housing Standing Panel

In the Panel Chairman's absence it was noted that the Panel wished to add a further item to its work programme namely payments by Leaseholder for Major Works. The Committee agreed to this addition.

(d) Constitutional and Members Services Standing Panel

It was noted that the Panels consideration of the review of area planning subcommittees was continuing and would be discussed again at the next meeting. A review of member training needs was also being considered.

(e) Leisure Services Task and Finish Panel

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on 21 November. It was hoped that the Panel would be a position to report its findings at the December 2006 Committee meeting.

(f) Town Centres and Car Parks Task and Finish Panel

The Panel, at its last meeting had considered a draft Cabinet report on proposals for free car parking in council owned car parks.

The Panel had held a broad discussion on the issue of free parking on Saturdays and the rationale behind it. There had been a general consensus in favour of the principle and the Panel members understood the financial effects of any such decision.

The Panel supported the proposals on the basis that they could enhance the viability of our Town Centres. They had questioned however, how the regime would be enforced to ensure that free spaces were for local rather than commuting purposes. The Panel had sought further information on this aspect..

Reference had been made to a retail scheme used in Waltham Forest to facilitate their free parking arrangements. It had been suggested that consultation could take place with that Authority to hear about their issues and solutions.

The Panel had accepted the recommendations as set out on the proposed Cabinet report but following discussions on ways in which the funding might be achieved wished to see an amendment to the third recommendation regarding the possible use of 'Local Authority Business Growth Incentive' grant (LABGI) to fund the one-off costs of implementation of the proposals.

The Panel had also suggested that the arrangements should be subject to operational review on a regular basis in order to identify whether the aims were being achieved and if not how they could be improved. The Panel had recommended to Cabinet accordingly.

(g) Crime and Disorder Task and Finish Panel

The Chairman of the Panel reported that the Panel had recently taken evidence from the Police and the PCT would be attending the next meeting on 23 November 2006.

(h) Local Strategic Partnership Task and Finish Panel

Noted that a subgroup of the Panel were to meet to discuss the draft of the report to be made to the Committee shortly. The Panel had received an update on the progress of the Essex Local Area Agreement at its last meeting.

Six Monthly Review of the Work Programme

The Committee noted that the Procedure Rules provided for a six monthly review of the work programme to examine priorities and any new proposals. It was agreed

however that, as the programme was currently running at full capacity, no new items should be considered for the programme at present.

50. REVIEW OF CIVIC CEREMONIAL - REPORT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND MEMBERS SERVICES SUB -GROUP

The Chairman of the Subgroup, Councillor R Morgan reported that the Panel on Constitutional Affairs had set up a subgroup to undertake a review of the Civic Ceremonial function.

Normally such reports would be considered by the Panel prior to consideration by the main Committee. As the report contained bids for growth for next years budget, the Chairman of the Panel had agreed to its consideration at this meeting as no meeting of the Panel would be held before the date of final budget bid considerations.

The report of the Subgroup brought forward a number of recommendations in relation to the service including officer support to the chairman, use of civic transport, civic hospitality, guidelines for the safe custody of civic regalia, and long service gifts for Councillors.

The Committee endorsed the proposals for onward consideration by the Cabinet subject to the inclusion of an intermediate long service award based upon 15 years service.

RESOLVED:

That the following recommendations of the Civic Ceremonial Review Subgroup of the Constitutional Affairs Standing Scrutiny Panel be forwarded to the Cabinet for adoption:

(a) That the following revenue CSB growth bids for 2007/8 be approved subject to consideration of the Council's budgets later in the municipal year:

(i) An increase of £2,500 per annum in the budget provision for hiring of civic transport (Vehicle Leasing budget) for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council; and

(ii) An additional sum of £5,000 (including on-costs) to provide one further day of officer support per week to the Chairman of Council;

(b) That, with effect from 2007/08 municipal year, £2,500 be retained by the Council out of the Chairman's Allowance and transferred to the Councils existing budget for Civic Hospitality;

(c) That the new Safe Custody Guidelines for the Civic Regalia attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes be adopted and issued each year to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and their spouses/partners;

(d) That the current policy for awards based upon length of service or positions held by Councillors be discontinued and replaced by the following revised awards policy:

“(i) Those serving as a Councillor for ten years or more – a presentation gift to the value of £50;

- (ii) Those serving as a Councillor for fifteen years or more – a presentation gift to the value of £75; and
- (iii) Those serving as a Councillor for twenty years or more – a presentation gift to the value of £100; and
- (e) That a range of gifts be selected by the Head of Research and Democratic Services from time to time in consultation with the Chairman of the Council”.

51. CABINET REVIEW

The Committee noted that the agreed recommendations of the Older Peoples Task and Finish Panel would be reported to the Cabinet for consideration at their next meeting. Additionally, the Chairman of the Town Centres and Car Parks Panel, Councillor Colling, would also report the view of his Panel on the free car parking report being considered at that meeting.

The Cabinet would be made aware of the recommendations for representation on the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee suggested by the North East London Borough’s prior to its consideration at the next full Council meeting.

CHAIRMAN

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Civic Regalia – Safe Custody Guidelines

Responsibilities:

1. The Council will:
 - (i) Maintain insurance cover for all civic regalia under a the Corporate 'All Risks' Insurance Policy;
 - (ii) Be responsible for the maintenance of the regalia including any damage or wear and tear etc as set out in the exclusions section 2 to the Corporate all risks policy.
2. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will:
 - (i) Ensure the specific conditions of the Council Insurance are followed as outlined in the guidance below; and
 - (ii) As far as is practical follow the other guidelines as to the safe custody of the regalia.
3. Specific Conditions of the Insurance:
 - (i) The regalia **must** not be left in an unattended vehicle **unless** all the doors, windows and other means of access have been secured and locked and all keys of the vehicle removed to a place of safety, **and** the regalia is placed in the boot of the vehicle or is otherwise out of sight.
4. Other practical measures:
 - (i) The regalia, unless being worn should be kept in the case provided by the Council. The jewellery roll should only be used when storing the regalia in a home safe or on the way to or from a function.
 - (ii) If the regalia is not required over a period of two weeks, it should be returned to Research and Democratic Services for safekeeping.
 - (iii) During any holiday periods or when it is likely that the member will be away from home, the regalia should be returned to Research and Democratic Services for safe keeping.
 - (iv) The Chairman/Vice-Chairman should normally only wear the regalia on arrival at a function. In any event the regalia should kept covered in public areas. They should seek advice from Research and Democratic Services if this arrangement is not convenient.
 - (v) The regalia should not be left unattended in its case or roll.
 - (vi) Members should not attempt to clean the regalia other than with a soft cloth. Any damage or wear and tear should be reported to Research and Democratic Services as soon as possible.
 - (vii) Regalia should not be loaned or placed in the custody of any other person other than the Head of Research and Democratic Services.
 - (viii) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman should inform Research and Democratic Services immediately if their Chains of Office are lost, mislaid, stolen or otherwise missing in order that the Council's insurers can be informed.

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EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Thursday, 7 December 2006

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.25 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Morgan (Chairman) Mrs J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman)
M Cohen, M Colling, R D'Souza, Mrs H Harding, Mrs P Richardson,
M Woollard, R Church, P McMillan and Mrs C Pond

Other Councillors: Councillors Mrs D Borton, Mrs D Collins, A Green, Mrs A Grigg,
Mrs P K Rush, D Stallan and C Whitbread

Apologies: Councillors D Bateman, P House and G Mohindra

Officers Present: J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), J Gilbert (Head of Environmental Services),
I Willett (Head of Research and Democratic Services), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant), M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

By Invitation: A Adams (Essex Police) and Councillor E Borton (Nazeing Parish Council)

52. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Committee noted that the meeting would be webcast.

53. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor R Church would be substituting Councillor D Bateman, Councillor P McMillan would be substituting Councillor G Mohindra and Councillor Mrs C Pond would be substituting Councillor P House.

54. MINUTES

It was agreed that as the minutes for the meeting on 9 November 2006 had not been made available prior to meeting, they be deferred to the next meeting for conformation.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

56. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING - PROGRESS REPORT

It was reported that on the 2 March 2006, the Committee received a presentation from Chief Superintendent Andy Adams, the Divisional Commander for the District on the Neighbourhood Policing Initiative.

The Committee heard about the key elements of the scheme designed to provide accessible and local known police officers to tackle local issues of concern. They also received information on progress with the roll out of the scheme in the District, and more general policing issues including Dispersal orders, response times to enquiries, anti-social behaviour and resourcing issues.

The Chairman welcomed back Chief Superintendent Andy Adams to report on progress with the local initiative and wider policing issues.

Mr Adams reiterated the aims behind the initiative which he anticipated Members also recognised and valued. He reminded the Committee that the task of providing a local visible policing presence in the District was a significant challenge due its geographical size (which covered a significant 'chunk' of the area in the Western Division) its diverse character and the problems in the surrounding areas. Mr Adams referred to a copy of the presentation containing the contact details of the officers for the local wards to be made available to all members of the Council.

He reported on the structure of the Western Division covering Harlow, Epping Forest and Brentwood including a total of 58 wards and 18 neighbourhood teams. He reported that the Epping Forest Division had four stations in Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton and Ongar which constituted most of the Western Divisions stations. He referred to its staffing establishment comprising a Divisional Commander, three Commanders and under this local neighbourhood teams.

In terms of current policing initiatives, he reported on the Automated Number Plate Recognition Scheme (ANPRS) facilitated by the installation of CCTV in Loughton to provide intelligence on car crime. The Committee noted the number of incidents captured by the system in the Loughton High Road area during November 2006 indicating its effectiveness in dealing with car crime. The scheme was a part Council , part Police driven process. The Committee noted action to deal with crime in railways stations with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership using scanning technology to check for knives. The Committee noted performance against tackling knife related crime and the provision of schemes supported by visible local policing in 'problem' areas to reduce this. The Committee heard about the Mobile Rural Police Office for the provision of information and help on local crime.

Reference was made to an operation, carried out over a 24 hour period, to show the forces commitment to reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in car accidents although this was not a significant problem in the District. The Committee noted figures indicating the schemes success. Members expressed support for this and asked that the work be carried out frequently.

In response the presentation, the Committee asked to received an update on the roll out of the District Neighbourhood Policing Scheme. It was clarified that phase one was to introduce the scheme to the neighbourhoods then to the wards. Each of which now had its own nominated community sergeant and teams involving Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

It was reported that the 'Policing Family' comprised officers, PCSOs and the special constabulary. Steps were being taken to increase the size of the special constabulary as there was a shortage of these officers. The Committee asked to receive the contact details for the ward sergeants. It was reported that this information was in the pack together with how the officer support for the scheme was distributed between the wards and beat information.

A Member stressed the need for the contact details and the mobile phone numbers of the local neighbourhood teams to be published in the local press. Consideration should be given to this measure if it had not already been implemented. It was also asked whether the staff at stations had these contact details. It was clarified that all front counter staff had been given the circulated leaflet and the details could be found on the Essex Police website. Mr Adams stated that he personally checked officer mobile phones to ensure they were contactable.

A Members asked about the number of vehicles stopped as a result of the Automated Vehicle Recognition Scheme? In reply it was clarified that the scheme was operated from Loughton Police station where the 'feed' was prioritised. Overall the results had demonstrated the system had been very effective and was a key measure in reducing such crime. Mr Adams offered to come back to the Committee to show Members how this system worked in more detail.

The Committee asked about the impact of local Dispersal of Group Orders. The orders had been made with regard to the need not to alienate the persons concerned which was key to their success. There was room for improvement in terms of usage.

The Committee asked about action to deal with the incidents of anti-social behaviour and underage drinking and drug use involving young people who had been moved on from areas subject to Dispersal of Group Orders. There appeared to be no police presence in these areas. How were they being patrolled? It was reported that the local division had dialogue with the Metropolitan Police over this and undertook action through the courts which had been successful. A Member reported on problems involving groups of youths in Buckhurst Hill. Mr Adams undertook to investigate this.

A member stated that there had been reoccurring issues with young people congregating and drinking outside North Weald Village Hall. Mr Adams reported the need to report this to the Police and also to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

A Member raised a question about missing crime reports and statements. Mr Adams undertook to investigate this if specific details were provided. He stated that the Human Rights Act did not present any problems for the service.

Consideration was given to the concern regarding offenders wearing Anti – Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) as 'badges of honour'. This was not an issue in the District. It was stated that the process for determining whether an ASBO should be made was undertaken in a considered and measured way involving contact with the offender and parents to look at the underlying cause of the problems. The ASBO was the final stage in this process if all else had failed. A member expressed concern about cycling on pedestrian areas in Waltham Abbey causing danger to pedestrians. Mr Adams stated that he was not aware of this particular issue but undertook to look into it. A Nazeing member asked about action to deal with concerns raised by her constituents about vandalism around the shops in High Mead where there were schools and sheltered housing. Mr Adams reassured the Member that officers would contact her about this. He undertook to take away the view that more work should be undertaken with the Council and referred to measures to deal with the underlying causes of crime specifically in Limes Farm.

The Committee asked about the effectiveness of PCSOs. Mr Adams reported that the growth of PCSOs in the area was much welcomed. The function that they fulfilled of providing uniformed officers who were part of the local community was invaluable. It was questioned whether PCSOs would be more effective and more of a deterrent

if they had the power of arrest? Mr Adams stated that he saw more benefit in the officers engaging with the community rather than dealing with arrests so there was no tension around the extension of their powers. The Committee expressed gratitude for the provision of smart cars to support rural policing. It was clarified that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had provided the vehicles to support police mobility around the rural areas. Mr Adams reported steps to increase further the vehicle access for the police.

The Chairman thanked Mr Adams for his presentation and answering the questions.

RESOLVED

That Chief Superintendent Andy Adams, the Divisional Commander for the District be thanked for his presentation on the Neighbourhood Policing Initiative and wider policing issues.

57. EFDC PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT - PRESENTATION AND REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH PANEL ON TOWN CENTRES AND CAR PARKS

The Committee considered a report of the Task and Finish Panel for Town Centre and Car Parks forwarding recommendations concerning the development of the new parking enforcement contract.

The Head of Environmental Services apologised for the unavailability of the consultants, Parking Associates Ltd, who had been due to report to the meeting on options for the development of the new contract as discussed with the Panel.

A final report of the consultants was attached to the agenda. The report considered the form of the new contract, ticket targets, car parks, lines and signs, pay and display machines, vehicle removals, parking shops, the new Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) and IT systems. The report had formed the basis of the Panels discussions and also had helped shape their recommendations.

It was reported that the Panel had met on two occasions to review the operation of contract ahead of the letting of the new contract due to come into operation in October 2007. The Panel had received two reports from the consultants on how best to proceed with the contract in view of the TMA, to replace Decimalised Parking Enforcement with Civil Parking Enforcement, and the governments views on how parking enforcement should be undertaken. The Committee considered each of the Panels recommendations in turn.

(a) Type of Contract

It was reported that in view of the need for the new contract to provide a partnership between the Council and the service provider, as both parties would be responsible for ensuring its success, the Panel had recommended that the new style of contract introduced by the British Parking Association and supported by central government be used for the contract. It was envisaged that this would provide greater transparency and accountability and performance indicators on which payment would be partly determined.

(b) Tender Process

The Panel had considered the clear directions in the TMA and agreed that it was essential that the new contract placed greater emphasis on quality of the service. As

a result the Panel had recommended, following consideration of the advise of the consultants, that there should be a 40% price, 60% quality balance in the contract.

(c) Signs and Lines

The Panel had proposed, given the complex process for arranging simple maintenance work brought about by the return of the highways function to the County, that the Council should open up discussions with the County with a view to them enabling the Council to commission minor works such as the repainting of yellow lines and the replacement of signs subject to the use of an approved County Contractors.

A Member requested that the word 'replace' in the text of the report be substituted by the word 'initiate' to state that the Council should be able to initiate yellow lines and signs rather than merely replace them. In reply, the Head of Environmental Services clarified that he was happy to speak to the County Council to see if this further flexibility could be taken forward.

(d) Consultation

It was noted that the Panel had undertaken consultation with all Members, town and parish Councils and town centre partnerships asking for their views on enforcement. The responses stressed the need to balance enforcement between the towns and more rural areas of the District, greater shift/unsocial hours enforcement and more on street rather than off street enforcement. The Panel supported these findings and wished to see them reflected in the new contract specification.

(e) Parking Shop

The Panel had considered the need for the Parking Shop in Loughton given the availability of technology for the services provided and the concern that the current facility was not very welcoming to customers and not accessible to the disabled. On balance they noted merit in providing a shop which provided easy access for the customers and space for the client side to be close to the contractor. They recommended that the contract specification continue to provide provision for the facility.

The Portfolio Holder reported that there had been some discussion about the location of the shop. Whilst the Panel had hoped that a suitable Council based premises could be found for the services, the option that it be housed at a premises in Loughton was not unanimously supported. He drew attention to the merits of locating the services at the Civic Officers at Epping and the savings this might generate. He felt that further consideration should be given to this alternative. Several Members also supported this option.

(f) Changes to the initial appeals process

The Committee noted that currently the enforcement contractor was responsible for dealing with initial appeals. The new TMA however would pass responsibility for the process to the Council and indicated that elected Members could not be involved in the appeals process. The Panel had agreed that a full time post should be created for the fulfilment of this additional function. The Panel noted that the costs of this had not yet become known as there might be a reduction in the price of the contract due to the contractors not having to provide the service.

(g) Car Parks

The Panel had noted details of measures for dealing with antisocial behaviour in car parks. The Panel noted details of a relatively new device call the Mosquito which was a deterrent to groups of teenagers who gathered in car parks. It was clarified that the problem of antisocial behaviour in car parks fell outside the remit of the contract. However it would be considered separately by the Panel, with the assistance of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, at a future meeting. The Portfolio Holder advised that there was scope for the measure to be added to the contract at a later date if felt necessary. The decision on this ultimately rested with the Council.

A member suggested that consideration should be given to widening the powers of wardens to allow them to report on environmental problems. Some Councils had used them to report on problems such as fly typing. She saw merit in this approach and requested that this be explored as part of the consideration of how to take forward the provision of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005. The Head of Environmental Services informed Members that consideration could be given to formulating a 'shopping list' of activities for parking attendants to take on in fulfilling their new role as Civil Enforcement Officers to be ascribed to them under the TMA. This could include provision for reporting on incidents of environmental crime.

RECOMMENDED TO THE CABINET:

- (1) That the British Parking Association contract be used as the basis for the new contract;
- (2) That the contract assessment be undertaken on the basis of 40% price and 60% quality;
- (3) That the Essex County Council be approached with a view to them enabling this Council to commission remedial works on yellow lines and associated signage;
- (4) That the outcome of the consultation exercise with all Members, Town and Parish Councils and Town Centre Partnerships be noted and the specification be drawn to include the key findings as outlined in sub – section (d) of the report
- (5) That the contract specification include a requirement for the provision of a 'Parking Shop';
- (6) That in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 the process for dealing with initial challenges to penalty charge notices be undertaken by the Council and that the establishment be increased by one full time equivalent post to resource this change;

58. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

The Committee considered the updated work programme.

Standing Panels

(a) Constitutional and Member Services

The Panel had considered a report on options for supporting Councillors subject to complaint when officer support could not be provided. The Panel had considered and broadly supported proposals for the establishment of an insurance scheme however

asked that the proposed service provider be asked to provide clarification on certain items in the proposals. The report was to be considered by the Cabinet on 18 December 2006.

The Panel gave further consideration to proposals to establish an Audit and Governance Committee and the relaxation of the proposed membership rules to enable scrutiny members to serve on it. The Panel had stressed the need for training for the members and supported the proposals.

(b) Customer Services and ICT Standing Panel

The Panel had revised their terms of reference to reflect the changes to the Customer Services Transformation Project. The Committee were asked to agree the changes.

RESOLVED:

That the revised terms of reference for the Customer Services and ICT Panel be adopted.

Task and Finish Panels

(d) Leisure

The Chairman of the Panel, Councillor Mrs H Harding reported on the current work of the Panel. The Panel had visited the Great Stoney Theatre Resources Centre and held meetings with the Grange Farm Trust and the Essex Wildlife Trust over the future management of the Roding Valley Nature Reserve.

(e) Town Centres and Car Parking

The Panel had looked at the development potential of five Council owned car parks. The Panel had recommended to the Cabinet that further work be carried out on the suitability of development, with an element of public car parking, on two of the sites and proposed that the remaining three be retained as car parks.

(f) Crime and Disorder

The Panel had last met on 23 November 2006 to consider the link between criminal activity and mental health issues. During the discussion, the Panel heard from representatives of the local PCT and Essex Fire Service and expressed a wish for their next meeting, to be arranged in the new year to hear from the

(h) Local Strategic Partnership

At its last meeting in November 2006, the Panel had heard from a representative from Essex County Council on the Local Area Agreement. The Panel had arranged to meet on 15 December 2006 to consider their final report to be circulated in the new year.

(i) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It was noted that on 19 December 2006, the Council would be asked to appoint two Members to the external scrutiny body for the Fit for Future Hospital Services Review which was considered at the 9 November 2006 meeting of the OSC. The February 2007 OSC was to receive a further presentation from the Local Commissioner for

Children's and Young Peoples Services on outcomes. County Highways would be attending the March 2007 meeting and London Underground would be attending the April 2007 meeting.

59. REVIEW OF AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee considered a late report of the Constitutional and Members Services Standing Panel on their review of the structure and membership of the Area Plans Sub – Committees.

The Chairman of the Committee had determined that this item should be dealt with at this meeting as a matter of urgency in order that the review could be concluded now rather than await the Committee's next meeting in February 2007.

The Chairman of the Panel, Councillor R Morgan, reported that the Panel had been asked to address a number of main issues covering the workload and membership of Area Plans C; the principle that all members should have a seat on their local Area Sub – Committee and whether there was merit in changing the areas covered by each Sub – Committee.

The Panel had consulted the local Councils and all members of the council through the members bulletin on the future shape and pattern of the Sub – Committees. As a result many often conflicting views had been expressed.

At its last meeting on 6 November 2006, the Panel considered four options previously identified. These concerned the issue of changing to a three sub – committee option (Area A plus two new subs reflecting a rural urban split in the rest of the District); adjusting the present four Sub – Committee structure by changing the areas of Area B and C or combining them to create a three Sub – Committee structure. The Panel also considered the option of no change.

The review clarified that a reduced number of Sub - Committee could improve the speed in determining planning applications, which had been improving anyway, and increase Planning Delivery Grant. It also clarified that the improvement might be marginal and would need to be supported by other improvements to raise performance to meet top quartile standards.

The Panel established that, due to the smaller workload and membership size of Area 'C', concerns had been expressed about it being iniquitous although this was not a regular occurrence. The real balance of argument was about local consideration of planning matters as against holding meetings for a relevantly small number of applications. Another issue was about travelling distances by members should there be any expansion in the areas, especially the larger rural areas, covered by the Sub – Committees.

The Panel determined the question of whether change was supported before they considered any of the options in detail. The Panel decided by a majority that no change be made to the pattern of the Area Plans Sub – Committees.

The Panel also considered a further issue regarding whether the Membership of Plans A should be expanded to allow all 25 local Members to serve on the Sub - Committee. The Panel were mindful of the views of several Area 'A' members that they did not seek changes to any aspect of that Sub – Committee and recommended that the Sub – Committee should be asked to express a view on the point and report back to the Committee.

The Committee raised a number of points in response to the report.

A member, who had attended some of the meetings, reported that there had been considerable discussion about the options. The Panel saw disadvantage in each. Possibly there should be some changes to Area 'C' to increase the Sub – Committee. The views of Area 'A' itself should be sought on the discussed increase of its membership in view of the strong support for no change to the Sub – Committee amongst several of its members. Subject to this the Members supported the recommendations of the Panel.

It was noted that the last meeting of Area 'C' had been cancelled due to a lack of business. It was suggested that 'B' and 'C' should be combined to level out the workload. In view of these concerns, a Member recommended that the Panels recommendation that no change be made to the present structure of the Sub – Committee be not supported. Instead he tabled an alternative set of proposals recommending that the principle of all members of the Council be members of an Area Plans Sub Committee be adopted; that Area Sub Committee A comprise 25 members; that the present Area Sub Committees B and C be combined.

In discussing these options, several Members of the Committee felt that all Members should be entitled to a seat on their local Sub – Committee to better represent their constituents and enhance local democracy. A former member of Area Plans 'A' reported his concerns about not having a seat on this years Sub-Committee as a result of the membership rules. He reported on regular contact with his constituents about Plans 'A' cases and their concern over the fact that he lacked the right to vote on the cases, in support of local views, as he was not a member of the sub-committee.

It was stated that all 25 Members of the wards under Area Sub – Committee A should meet to consider and express views on the future size of the Sub – Committee. Should an increase in the size of the membership be agreed, consideration would need to be given to the suitability of the current venue, the Roding Valley High School Dining Hall for holding meetings of 25 Members. Bearing in mind the capacity that would be necessary for the change and the size of the dining hall, alternative accommodation might need to be found.

A Member questioned the practicalities of increasing the membership of Area 'A' to 25. He felt that in view of the significant workload of the Sub – Committee, the proposal might result in lengthy discussions at meetings and might not enable the proper consideration of the business within a reasonable length of time.

A Member expressed a desire to see more Members on Area C. It was felt that they often considered 'groundbreaking' cases that involved green belt policy which merited greater member involvement. A Member of Area 'D' reported on concerns expressed in Nazeing about the balance of representation on the Sub-Committee as most of its remit concerned rural areas yet majority of its membership represented urban wards. This imbalance should be addressed.

Having considered the options, the Committee decided that the Panels recommendations did not address the reasons for the review as highlighted as at the start of this minute. To address the issues they decided to support the recommendations tabled at the meeting for changes to the structure of the Sub – Committees for onward consideration by the Council.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL:

- (1) That the recommendations of the Constitutional Affairs Scrutiny Standing Panel that no change be made to the pattern of Area Plans Sub not be supported ;
- (2) That the principle of all members of the Council be members of an Area Plans Sub Committee be adopted;
- (3) That Area Sub Committee A comprise 25 members;
- (4) That the present Area Sub Committees B and C be combined;
- (5) That these changes take effect from the next Council year.”

60. CABINET REVIEW

It was reported that, during this cycle of meetings, scrutiny had considered and commented on a number of Cabinet reports(Cabinet Item 8 (Civic Ceremonial) 11 (Code of Conduct, Legal Expenses Cover for Councillors) and 24 (Review of Housing Allocations Scheme)

It was noted that the comments would be reported to the Cabinet meeting for consideration. Subject to this no further issues were raised.

CHAIRMAN

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Tuesday, 9 January 2007

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 8.30 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Morgan (Chairman) Mrs J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman)
M Colling, R D'Souza, Mrs H Harding, P House, G Mohindra,
Mrs P Richardson and M Woollard

Other Councillors: Councillors K Angold-Stephens, K Chana, R Church, Mrs D Collins,
R Frankel, A Green, Mrs A Grigg, A Lee, J Markham, P Spencer, D Stallan,
C Whitbread, J M Whitehouse, K Wright, Mrs C Pond and Mrs A Cooper

Apologies: Councillors D Bateman and M Cohen

Officers Present: J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer),
T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer) and A Hendry (Democratic
Services Officer)

By Invitation:

61. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Committee noted that the meeting would be webcast.

62. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members for the meeting.

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

64. FREE SATURDAY CAR PARKING - CALL IN

The Committee were asked to consider the call-in of a Cabinet decision of 13 November 2007 (C/067/2006-07) regarding free car parking proposals for Saturdays. It was noted that six Members had requested that the decision should be called in and that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had determined that the request be determined by this extraordinary meeting of the Committee. The Committee had before them copies of the report submitted to the Cabinet on which the decision was based and of the written notification of the call-in and a covering report to the committee by the Head of Service responsible for the decision.

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules, the representative of the Councillors calling-in the decision (Councillor Mrs J Whitehouse, who vacated the Vice-Chairmanship of the meeting in order to present their case) outlined their

concerns, which were summarised in the call-in notification. She pointed out that they were not against the concept of free parking on a Saturday but were concerned about the manner in which the decision was taken. That being:

- (i) Financial – no account was taken of the ‘knock-on’ effects of the reduced use of the short stay car parks and on-street pay and display bays.
- (ii) No account had been taken of the potential effects on weekday parking charges, which are set to rise in the next financial year with a potential negative effect on town centres.
- (iii) It was unclear how the £75,000 loss to the Continuing Service Budget would be funded, whether by Council Tax rises, cuts to services, increases to fees and charges or some other method.
- (iv) That at this time of financial strain it pre-empts the budget making process.
- (v) Operational – the link between the level of car park charges and the vitality and viability of Epping Forest’s Centres has not been properly considered; therefore it was not clear that the Cabinet’s decision would have the intended effect.
- (vi) The criteria for review had not been established, meaning that the success of the scheme could not be properly measured.
- (vii) The effect on parking as a whole in the effected towns (especially in Loughton and Buckhurst Hill) had not been properly evaluated.
- (viii) Procedural – there had been insufficient consultation with town and parish councils and local ward members, meaning that some of the potential consequences of the decision had not been properly considered.

One of the councillors who had signed the call-in, Councillor K Wright added that the key issue here was support from Town Councils – there was no evidence that free parking would bring any benefits. It was unusual to spend the money without evidence; the money could be better spent elsewhere. Also the implications of the proposals need careful monitoring. He was pleased that the Cabinet had allocated £75,000 to support Town Councils, but they may need the money spent in other ways.

Councillor J Markham, another signature on the call-in added that he was not opposed to free parking but to the lack of consultation. How much would this cost in lost revenue. Other parking charges were increased and then put down again, this was muddled thinking. It would help if free car parking could be limited to two hours on a Saturday and be monitored. Are the Car Parks to be entirely free or only parts of them, this is still to be clarified.

Councillor P Spencer, another member who signed the call-in, added that he thought the traders did not think that their views had been taken into account, and that these free spaces were more likely to be used by the traders themselves.

The Portfolio Holder for Civil Engineering and Maintenance, Councillor A Green replied that they had not rushed into this policy; they had been consulting on their intention to provide free Saturday parking since May 2006. The estimated cost of free Parking would be £75,000 (due to loss of income). It was decided that the short end of charges should remain as is, to encourage shoppers. They would like to have free Parking charges in all Car Parks in the District but this was not possible. Town Centre partnerships had been asked for their views and ward councillors have been aware of this for some time. The Free Car Parking scheme in December was looked at and found that it produced no problems. As for introducing time limited free car parking, we would have to employ Traffic Wardens to enforce this, and this would increase the costs. This is a trial scheme and we will review this policy in time.

Councillor M Colling, who chaired the Task and Finish Panel that looked at this proposed policy remarked that it was discussed fully by the Panel and was unanimously passed. But they did ask for it to be monitored once it was up and running and to look out for abuses.

The meeting was then opened up for a general discussion on the call-in.

Councillor D'Souza agreed that this decision was not taken in haste and had been discussed for some time; also the budget had now been balanced. The regeneration of Town Centres had been discussed in full Council. It was right that every decision should be monitored. He noted that the residents of Waltham Abbey are happy with this.

Councillor House commented that although some discussion had been had, they were not as detailed as the one being had tonight. He recommended the review of the policy should concentrate on: 1) the effect on the traders and 2) misuse of the Car Parks.

Councillor Woollard was in favour of some form of free car parking but not necessarily on a Saturday and certainly not for Buckhurst Hill as it would not make a great deal of difference. There was poor consultation on this policy.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse said that having a slogan was not the same as having a policy. This was not thought through, the report does not state what the Town Council Partnerships said. In December all Car Parks were free, so it was not a good way to judge this policy. This Committee should recommend that Cabinet must put in a report where the money was to come from. Also any consultation should be reported back in Cabinet reports. They also need to know how it would be measured a success or not.

Councillor Angold-Stephens commented that they all agreed that the Council wanted to increase the vitality of High Streets, but free parking may not make any difference. He was concerned about increasing the charges during the week, the need to increase the diversity of the shops and need to know how the monitoring of the scheme would be done.

Councillor Markham agreed that the decision process was muddled and wanted to know how much the new free car park in Loughton, which has been free for some months has this loss of revenue been taken into account with the £75,000 costs.

Councillor Church said that he had canvassed residents last year about this and they thought it was a good idea.

Councillor Mrs Collins was very disappointed at the negative views expressed. This was put up as their policy last May. The Budget is now balanced as they have found the money. It was good for residents and good for traders.

Councillor Whitbread said it was a good package, as the local traders needed support. It was step in the right direction.

The lead member responsible for the call-in (Councillor Mrs J Whitehouse) and the Portfolio Holder (Councillor A Green) were then asked to sum up the debate.

Councillor Mrs Whitehouse said that this was a useful debate, she again stressed that this was not against free Car Parking, but the manor in which the decision was taken and the speed in which it was taken. There was no evidence that this would

help the Town Councils, and was not discussed in great depth by the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel. She would like to know what had to be abandoned to balance the budget. Also what was to be the criteria for the proposed review?

Councillor Green replied that he took on board their comments on monitoring and the different ways this could be done. But this policy had been through not only the Council but also the Overview and Scrutiny process.

The call-in was then put to the vote.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Call-in regarding Cabinet decision C/067/2005-06 not be pursued and the decision be implemented with immediate effect.
2. That the Portfolio Holder, Councillor A Green be asked to report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2007 on the review procedures put into place.

CHAIRMAN

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 1 February 2007

Subject: Council Budgets 2007/08

Officer contact for further information: Bob Palmer (ext 4279)

Committee Secretary: Z Folley (ext 4532)



Recommendation:

That the Committee consider the recommendations of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel and recommend them, as amended if necessary, to the Cabinet.

Report:

1. This is the second set of budget proposals to be considered under the revised Overview and Scrutiny arrangements. In previous years the detailed proposals were taken to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 then considered the budget as a whole and made recommendations to Cabinet.
2. The timetable for the approval of the 2007/08 budgets is as follows:

Finance & Performance Management Scrutiny Panel	15 January 2007
Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee	29 January 2007
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1 February 2007
Cabinet	5 February 2007
Full Council	20 February 2007
3. At the 15 January meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel an updated four-year financial forecast was considered and this is attached as Annex 1a and 1b. The key assumptions in the new forecast are set out below:
 - a. CSB Growth – growth has been restricted in 2007/08 to £138,000 to keep the CSB total below £17m. For 2008/09 growth items of £354,000 have currently been identified, however further savings will be sought during the year to minimise any net growth. The growth of £1.5m for waste management has been included in the revised estimates for 2006/07, but is partly offset by an increase in income from recycling credits of £262,000.
 - b. DDF – all known items for the four-year period are included and at the end of the period a balance of £809,000 is still available. This is after revising the estimates for LABGI income from £200,000 to £500,000 for 2006/07 and from £0 to £200,000 in 2007/08. The exact amounts to be received are uncertain as the formula has changed, but a national ceiling will be applied to cap total income from the scheme, which will lead to some authorities receiving less than the amount suggested by the pure application of the formula.
 - c. Grant Funding – the settlement figures have been included for 2007/08. It has been assumed that for 2008/09 and subsequent years the gross grant entitlement will increase by 2%. It has also been assumed that the amount lost to support the floor for other authorities will reduce over the period to give net grant increases of 3.5% in 2008/09, 2.5% in 2009/10 and 2.1% in 2010/11.

- d. Council Tax Increase – Members have confirmed they wish to keep rises in line with inflation and so an increase of 3.5% has been included for 2007/08. It is anticipated that growth in the retail prices index will reduce from the current level of 3.9% to 2.5% in subsequent years and so 2.5% has been used for future increases.

4. The inclusion of significant growth in CSB needs to be considered in terms of the level of revenue balances. Even allowing for the higher Council Tax increase in 2007/08 of 3.5% the table below illustrates that reserves as a percentage of NBR will fall to the guideline level by 2009/10 and will have significantly breached the guideline by 2010/11.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Net Budget Requirement	£15.792M	£16.659M	£17.166M	£17.596M	£18.001M
Opening Reserves	£6.456M	£5.954M	£5.633M	£4.708M	£3.439M
Reserves as % of NBR	40.9%	35.7%	32.8%	26.8%	19.1%

5. An oral update will be given on the recommendations of the 15 January meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel on the revised four-year forecast. The Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel is also considering the detailed draft budgets for each Portfolio. Any comments or amendments suggested will also be reported orally to this Committee, as will the views of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee being held on 29 January.
6. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is now asked to consider the recommendations of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel and approve the updated four-year forecast.

REVISED GENERAL FUND FOUR YEAR FORECAST 2006/07 - 2009/11

ORIGINAL 2006/07		REVISED FORECAST 2006/07	FORECAST 2007/08	FORECAST 2008/09	FORECAST 2009/10	FORECAST 2010/11
£'000	NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
14,480	Continuing Services Budget	14,406	16,842	17,737	18,860	19,450
773	CSB - Growth Items	1,738	138	354	5	0
15,253	Total C.S.B	16,144	16,980	18,091	18,865	19,450
1,655	One - off Expenditure	2,173	876	186	13	0
150	Contribution to/from Insurance reserve	150	0	0	0	0
17,058	Total Net Operating Expenditure	18,467	17,856	18,277	18,878	19,450
-1,655	Contribution to/from (-) DDF Balances	-2,173	-876	-186	-13	0
389	Contribution to/from (-) Balances	-502	-321	-925	-1,269	-1,449
15,792	Net Budget Requirement	15,792	16,659	17,166	17,596	18,001
FINANCING						
9,117	Government Support (NNDR+RSG)	9,117	9,350	9,537	9,728	9,922
-490	RSG Floor Gains/(-Losses)	-490	-189	-58	-12	0
8,627	Total External Funding	8,627	9,161	9,479	9,716	9,922
7,160	District Precept	7,160	7,498	7,687	7,880	8,078
5	Collection Fund Adjustment	5	0	0	0	0
15,792	To be met from Government Grants and Local Tax Payers	15,792	16,659	17,166	17,596	18,001
	Band D Council Tax	134.73	139.50	143.01	146.61	150.30
	Percentage Increase %		3.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

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REVISED GENERAL FUND FOUR YEAR FORECAST 2006/07 - 2010/11

	REVISED FORECAST 2006/07	FORECAST 2007/08	FORECAST 2008/09	FORECAST 2009/10	FORECAST 2010/11
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
REVENUE BALANCES					
Balance B/forward	6,456	5,954	5,633	4,708	3,439
Surplus/Deficit(-) for year	-502	-321	-925	-1,269	-1,449
Balance C/Forward	5,954	5,633	4,708	3,439	1,990
DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND					
Balance B/forward	3,007	1,567	1,008	822	809
Income	733	317	0	0	0
Transfer Out	-2,173	-876	-186	-13	0
Balance C/Forward	1,567	1,008	822	809	809
CAPITAL FUND (inc Cap Receipts)					
Balance B/forward	20,073	22,318	17,920	16,667	16,055
New Usable Receipts	10,565	914	831	819	817
CR Used to Fund Capital Expenditure					
- Transitional Relief Receipts	-1,722	0	0	0	0
- Other Capital Receipts	-6,598	-5,312	-2,084	-1,431	-1,137
Balance C/Forward	22,318	17,920	16,667	16,055	15,735
TOTAL BALANCES	29,839	24,561	22,197	20,303	18,534

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – 2006/07
As at January 2007

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<i>Housing Standing Panel</i>			
(1) Annual Ethnic Monitoring Review of Housing Applicants	Medium	Submitted to July meeting	30 January 30 April 2007.
(2) Updated draft Housing Strategy	High	No longer required –report on letter from GO-East to be considered at this meeting.	
(3) Empty Property Strategy	High	Considered by Panel at 27 July 2006 meeting	
(4) Housing Service Strategy on the Private Rented Sector	Low	Considered by Panel at 31 October 2006 meeting	
(5) Housing Service Strategy on Empty Council Properties	Low	Considered by Panel at 31 October 2006 meeting	
(6) Annual Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme	High	Considered by Panel at 31 October 2006 meeting	
(7) Six-monthly Progress Report on Local Supporting People Strategy Action Plan	Medium	Considered by Panel at 31 October 2006 meeting	
(8) Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	High	Completed by Panel on 27 July 2006	
(9) Six-monthly Progress Report on Housing Strategy Action Plan	Medium	Not longer required for this year - report on letter from GO-East to be considered at January 2007 meeting	
(10) Updated draft HRA Business Plan	High	Not yet required	
(11) Updated draft Local Supporting People Strategy	High	Not yet required	

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(12) Implementation of Choice Based Lettings	High - Final Report April 2007	In progress – The Panel considered the draft specification at its special meeting on 11 September 2006. Oral report to be given to this meeting	
(13) Six-monthly Progress Report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	Medium January 2007	To be considered at the January 2007 meeting	
(13) Housing Harassment Strategy	Medium	Submitted to July 2006 meeting	
(14) Housing Services Strategy on Diversity and Equality	Medium September 2006	Considered by Panel at 31 October 2006 meeting	
(15) Leaseholder Service Charges for Major Works and Improvements – Payment Arrangements	Medium January 2007	To be considered at the January 2007 meeting	
(16) Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results	January 2007	To be considered at this meeting – The detailed results of the tri-annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey are due to be considered at this meeting.	
(17) Housemark Benchmarking Report of Housing Services	January 2007	To be considered at this meeting – The results of the first Housemark Benchmarking Report of Housing Services are due to be considered at this meeting.	
<i>Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel</i>			
(1) Council Meetings – Completion of Review of Future Role.	June 2006	Completed – Report endorsed by OSC on 6 July 2006 and by Council on 25 July 2006	8 February, 2 April 2007
(2) Review of Area Planning Sub – Committees	August 2006	Completed - Report submitted to OSC on 7 Dec 2006.	
(3) Complaints Against Councillors – Review of Support.	December 2006	Completed Report considered by OSC and Cabinet in Dec 2006.	

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(4) Review of Changes in the legal requirements concerning postal voting and resource implications/ procedures for electoral registration.	October 2006	Completed on 10 October 2006	
(5) Review of May 2006 Elections	July 2006	Completed on 10 October 2006	
(6) Completion of Review of Parliamentary Constituencies.	subject to OPDM timetable	Completed on 10 October 2006	
(7) Re-use of Public Sector Information Guidelines	August 2006	Completed on 11 September 2006	
(8) Review of Cabinet Arrangements	September 2006	Completed on 11 September 2006	
(9) Review of Civic Ceremony	July 2006	Completed- Sub – Group to report direct to OSC on 9 December 2006	
(10) Member Training – Review	February 2007	Underway - Review of this years programme and formulation of 2007/08 programme.	
(11) Audit and Governance Committee – Terms of Reference and Constitution	December 2006	Completed Proposals endorsed by the Cabinet on 18 December 2006.	
(12) Review of Contract Standing Orders/Financial Regulations	February 2007	Officer Working Party to report	
<i>Environmental and Planning Services Standing Panel</i>			
(1) Essex County Joint Waste Procurement Process	Ongoing	Underway – Panel considers decisions of the West Essex Waste Joint Management Committee as and when they become available	26 February, 26 April 2007.

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(2) New Local Development Scheme	Ongoing		
(3) Re use of buildings in the Green Belt	Ongoing		
(4) Traffic Issues in the Roydon and Nazeing Areas.	Ongoing	Underway - Focus day agreed in principle to identify issues	
(5) East of England Plan – EFDC Response to Examination in Public		Underway: meeting on 16 January 2007 commented on summary of proposals	
(6) Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2006 – Implementation of provisions	April 2007	Underway	
(7) Ongoing Traveller Issues	Ongoing	Report on future Gypsy and Traveller provision to be submitted to future meeting	
(8) Planning Performance – monitoring of enforcement figures/outcomes	Ongoing	Statistics and reporting arrangements considered by the Panel on 30 October 2006. To be reported on a regular basis in Members Bulletin and reviewed by the Panel following six month trial.	
(9) Waste Management – Size of Wheeled Bins	Ongoing	Completed	
Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel			
(1) Best Value Performance Data	Quarterly	Underway: Ongoing KPI scrutiny PI second quarterly monitoring data considered by Panel on 14 November 2006	12 February 2007
(2) Performance (Services to be scrutinised in Rotation)		Underway : Local Land Charges considered on 14 November 2006	
(3) Quarterly Financial Monitoring	2006/07	Underway: Third Quarterly information to be considered by the Panel on 12 February 2007.	

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(4) Annual Audit Plan	February 2007	Completed	
(5) Local Area Agreements		Panel considered Performance Indicators on 14 November 2006.	
(6) Draft Council Plan 2006-2010		Completed	
(7) Budget Papers		To be reported at the November, January & February meetings. Nov. meeting to consider growth/ savings; Jan. meeting to consider the detailed budget; & Feb. meeting for last comments prior to formal tax setting	
(8) Value for Money Strategy and Data Quarterly Audit		Report considered by Panel on 15 August 2006	
(9) Salary Underspends/ Staff Vacancies		Report considered by Panel on 15 August 2006	
(9) CPA Improvement Plan		Report considered by Panel on 14 November 2006	
(10) Consultation Plan		Report considered by Panel on 14 November 2006	
(11) Recruitment and retention progress report		Report considered by Panel on 14 November 2006	
(12) Value for money analysis		Sub – Group to be set up to consider the report in depth.	
Customer Services and ICT Standing Panel			
(1) Customer Contact Centre	Ongoing see (7) below	Proposed Progress reports on Customer Services Transformation Programme to every meeting	7 February, 19 April 2007.
(2) Review of Council's IEG Strategy	August 2006	Completed on 14 August 2006	

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(3) Webcasting Project	July 2007	Further evaluation to be presented at July 2007 mtg. Project agreed to continue pending evaluation	
(4) Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Referral	February 2007	To be considered at February 2007 mtg	
(5) Desktop Strategy	February 2007	February 2007 meeting – Standardisation and Security arrangements	
(6) New Revenue and Benefits System		Cabinet report to be submitted to February 2007 mtg	
(7) Customer Services Working Group feedback	April 2007	New	
Task and Finish Panel on Leisure Services			
(1) Future Management of Waltham Abbey Sports Centre	May/June 2007	Underway: Consultation undertaken with King Harold High School. Awaiting Governing Bodies views	18 January 2007 – Cancelled
(2) Review of Future Management of the Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve	March 2007	Underway: Largely complete. Final meeting with Grange Farm Trust and Corporation of London planned for February 2007.	
(3) Review of Arts Development in the District	March 2007.	Underway: Final date for review to be arranged	
(4) District Council's Role and involvement in Outdoor and Community Events	March 2007.	Underway: Presentation scheduled for January mtg.	
Town Centre and Car Parks Task and Finish Panel			
(1) Free Saturday parking	December 2006	Completed Considered on 2 October 2006. Report submitted to Cabinet on 13 November 2006	

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(2) Car parking enforcement contract	High	Completed: submitted to December OSC.	
(3) Anti Social Behaviour in Car Parks	High	To be considered at next meeting	
(4) Development potential of EFDC owned Car Parks	December 2006	Completed: submitted to December 2006 Cabinet	
Crime and Disorder Task and Finish Panel			
Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - Government Review and Recommendations		Next meeting to hear from Youth Offenders Service and Drugs Intervention Team.	TBA
Local Strategic Partnership Task and Finish Panel			
Review of Government Consultation paper 'Local Strategic Partnerships - shaping their future'	May 2007	Underway. The Panel have reached report formulation stage. Anticipated that findings will be reported to Feb OSC	TBA.

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<i>Older and Disabled Persons Task and Finish Panel</i>			
Review of Services provided by this Council and associated voluntary agencies to older persons and the disabled.	December/January 2007	Underway The Panel have reached report formulation stage. Anticipated that findings will be reported to Feb OSC	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(1) Scrutiny of London Underground Ltd	April 2007			8 March, 5 April 2007.
(2) Response to proposed changes to Whipps Cross Hospital	November 2006		Considered on 9 November 2006.	
(3) Presentation from the Local Commissioner for Children's and Young Peoples Services.	February 2007		Local Commissioner to attend February 2007 mtg	
(4) Scrutiny of Highways Local Service Agreement	March 2007			
(5) Scrutiny of organised bodies -- PCT	TBA		TBA	
(6) Scrutiny of Epping Forest College	May 2006		Considered on 25 May 2006	
(7) Scrutiny of Essex Police -- Merger Proposals	July 2006		Considered on 6 July 2006	
(8) Scrutiny of Essex Police -- Neighbourhood Policing Initiative	December 2006		Considered on 7 December 2006.	
(9) Draft Council Plan 2006-2010	July 2006		Submitted to July 2006 meeting	
(10) Scrutiny of Cabinet Forward Plan	August 2006		Considered on 31 August 2006	
(11) Free Saturday Car Parking - Progress Report	March 2007			

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