

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF LEADER MEDIA BRIEFING  
HELD ON MONDAY, 5 JUNE 2006  
IN LEADERS ROOM, CIVIC OFFICES, EPPING  
AT 2.30 PM**

These are the notes of the latest media briefing given by Councillor Diana Collins, Leader of Epping Forest District Council. Whilst every effort is made to accurately record the views of the Leader, the notes are not intended to be taken as a verbatim account of the briefing and may contain mistakes or omissions.

**Present:** Mrs D Collins (Leader and Leaders Portfolio Holder) and Mrs A Grigg (Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder)

**Note Taker:** T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer)

**Also in attendance:** D Jackman (West Essex Guardian), Alison Jackson (Ongar and North Weald Gazette) and Dan Peters (Mercury)

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**1. CABINET AGENDA**

- 1.1 Councillor Mrs Collins began by making brief references to some of the items of business scheduled for discussion at Cabinet later that day. She drew attention to atrium ventilation, tenants satisfaction survey, comfort cooling of the teaching pool viewing area at Loughton Leisure Centre, the capital out-turn and the review of the previous decision to demolish council garages as part of the Broadway Town Centre Enhancement Scheme.
- 1.2 Referring to the draft Best Value Performance Plan, Councillor Mrs Collins noted that the draft was to be amended slightly to take account of the new emphasis placed upon the 6 key messages discussed in the briefing of 22 May. (Reorganisation of Waste Collection, Free Saturday Parking, Improve the Environment, Protecting the Green Belt, Support for Local Young People, Keep Democracy Local).
- 1.3 Councillor Mrs Collins also drew attention to the Cabinet report outlining potential Council involvement in the national initiative to introduce a Single Non Emergency Number (SNEN). She reported that the purpose of this new number was to deal with 'lesser emergencies' and that Epping Forest District Council was considering involvement along with other Essex district councils. At present Councils were being asked to consider whether it was 'worthwhile'.

**2. COUNTRYCARE 20TH ANNIVERSARY**

- 2.1 Councillor Mrs Anne Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder introduced this item. She began by noting the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Epping Forest Countrycare. Describing the service as one of the most 'successful and well supported' she described the recent reunion of former staff and volunteers.
- 2.2 As part of the celebrations, staff and volunteers toured some of the more notable sites improved by Countrycare including woods, nature reserves and ponds in Chigwell Row, Nazeing, Roydon and at Swaines Green in Epping.

- 2.3 Councillor Mrs Grigg recalled that Countrycare was originally a joint initiative by Epping Forest District Council and the Countryside Commission. It was initially set up for a three year period but made permanent in 1995 and had gone on from strength to strength. Among the highlights Mrs Grigg listed:
- 115,000 hours of volunteer time
  - £718,000 equivalent of grant funding
  - Eight new nature reserves
  - £108,000 of external grant aid since 2000
  - 5,500 school children involved in volunteer work
  - 50,000 trees planted
  - Many bridges, way-markers and fingerposts installed and maintained
  - 500 walks, talks and events attended by approximately 15,000 members of the public.
- 2.4 Looking to the future, Councillor Mrs Grigg was very enthusiastic about the 50 Favourite Trees initiative. She said that she was hoping for many entries. People could nominate their favourite tree on-line or in writing. The only stipulation was that trees on private land should only be nominated with the permission of the landowner. Tom Carne circulated copies of the associated publicity leaflet giving details of the scheme.
- 2.5 In the current year, Councillor Mrs Grigg also noted further improvements to Lindsfield – the entrance at North Farm in Buckhurst Hill. The service current had 70 registered regular volunteers who tended to work in groups of 12. Councillor Mrs Grigg concluded by emphasising the quality of the service and wishing it every success for the future.

### **3. DISPERSAL ORDERS**

- 3.1 Councillor Mrs Collins introduced the final item on behalf of Community Well-being Portfolio Holder Mrs Syd Stavrou. She informed the briefing of the Police request for an extension to the dispersal orders focused on the areas around Loughton and Debden London Underground Stations.
- 3.2 Councillor Mrs Collins said that from her own experience, the Police were very active in Loughton, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings when young people tended to congregate. She felt that the Police were making every effort and dispersal orders would assist the process by preventing large groups walking from the train stations to the high street areas.
- 3.3 The purpose of the police request was for the Council to endorse the extension of existing dispersal orders for a further six-month period (see maps circulated by Tom Carne for area covered). Local ward councillors were consulted and Mrs Collins was happy that the Council should support the Police. She felt that by preventing large groups coming into the high streets the police could 'stop' incidents 'before they start'.
- 3.4 The two existing dispersal orders were specific to Loughton and Debden stations. Mrs Collins noted that such orders could also be applied in other locations if the Council and Police felt they would have a positive effect.

### **4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 12 June